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ROYAL COMMISSION ON BILINGUALISM AND BICULTURALISM

RESEARCH STUDIES

THE CONTRIBUTION MADE BY

THE SCANDINAVIAN ETHNIC GROUPS

TO

THE CULTURAL ENRICHMENT OF CANADA

BY

HON. W. J. LINDAL, Q. C.

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA





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## PART ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### Chapter 1 - The Basic Background

Edmund Curtis, late Professor of History in the University of Dublin, in "A History of Ireland," opens the Chapter on the Norse migrations and Norse rule in Ireland during the period 800-1014, with these words:

"About the year 800 the Scandinavians, moved by an uncontrollable impulse, took to the sea."

This was the beginning of what came to be called The Viking Age. That "uncontrollable impulse" has too often been seen in only one of its manifestations - fierce fighting and merciless slaughter - inevitable wherever they met resistance.

That impulse, usually referred to as "The Viking Spirit" is, according to Oleson<sup>(1)</sup> "one of the great and vital forces in history." It was a yearning, a quest the Norsemen may not have fully understood themselves. What drove them on was not a lust for power. Conquest, as such, was not their aim; that is clearly revealed once the objectives were reached, whether in settled lands or in uninhabited areas. To reach objectives, mostly undefined in advance, an indomitable courage had to be shown and an unyielding determination. Both had to be applied whether the resistance was that of organized human forces, or the relentless forces of nature. It is, therefore, much more enlightening to examine what took





place after objectives were reached than the nature of the unavoidable means necessary to reach them.

Generally speaking, two types of objectives were reached: unpeopled tracts of land; areas already inhabited with social structures varying with the degree of civilization already established.

This quest reached out from the Scandinavian countries in all directions. In the extreme north-east there was Ottar, who had sailed around the Kola peninsula into the White Sea. The area was uninviting and the climate severe so he turned back and joined the trek to the British Isles, <sup>(2)</sup> usually referred to in the Saga literature as The Western Islands. For a while he was at the court of Alfred the Great.

Then there was the migration south-east and south, to what in Icelandic annals was called Gardaríki. <sup>(3)</sup> According to The Ancient Chronicle of Nestor, <sup>(4)</sup> these Norsemen called themselves "Rus" but were more commonly referred to as Variagi or Varangians.

The local Slavs (Ruthenians) were constantly being harassed from the east and they welcomed the arrival of the Rus or Varangians who took command of their forces. Prof. L. Biberovich, (now of Toronto, formerly of Winnipeg), said in a carefully prepared paper for The Viking Club of Winnipeg: <sup>(5)</sup>

"The names of the early Russo-Varangian princes and their retainers are almost all Scandinavian in origin, Rurik appearing as Hrǫrekr, Truvor as Thorvadr, Oleg as Helge, Olga as Helga, Igor as Ingvar, Askold as Hǫskuldr."

Rurik founded Novgorod and Askold founded Kiev. This leadership might in the case of other peoples have led to a "colonizing" of





the area, a total conquest. But something totally different happened. Prof. Biberovich refers to a letter by a Jewish writer by the name of Ibrahim, written in the tenth century, who, in part said:

"the tribes of the North, among them the people of Rus, have placed certain Slavs in subjection and are dwelling in their midst to this day. Nay, they have become so intermingled with them as even to have adopted their tongue."

Another group of Vikings led by Rollo (Göngu-Hrólf) overran the territory which came to be called Normandy. Dr. E. A. Freeman, the noted British historian, in writing about the Normans (a softened form of the word Northmen) said:<sup>(6)</sup>

"Everywhere they gradually lost themselves among the people whom they conquered; they adopted the language and the national feelings of the lands in which they settled, but at the same time they often modified, often strengthened the national usages and national life of the various nations in which they were finally merged."

The above words could be equally well applied to any of the Northmen who, in their uncontrollable urge to reach out, happened to overrun lands already peopled.

Even though the Normans became the rulers of Normandy that did not confine their innate impulse to venture further. The invasion of England by William, the Conqueror, need be but barely mentioned here, but a reference must be made to another Norman, Count Roger (1030-1101) who conquered Sicily and became Roger I, King of Sicily.

At the time of the Norman Conquest of Sicily, Greek and Arabic were the written tongues in Sicily. Roger I, brought in French (as the Old Norse language of Normandy had completely disappeared) which became





the court speech during the Norman regime in Sicily. Dr. E. A. Freeman with Thomas Ashby, made two very significant statements revealing the original Norse mind at its best: (7)

"The Norman princes protected all the races, creeds and tongues of the island, Greek, Saracen and Jew. But new races came to settle alongside of them, all of whom were Latin as far as their official speech was concerned."

"The most brilliant time for Sicily as a power in the world begins with the coming of the Normans. Never before or after was the island so united or so independent."

It may be appropriately added that a large majority of the settlers of New France (Quebec) came from Normandy and Brittany.

Settlement by Northmen in uninhabited lands reveal a different aspect of the Norse mind. It is the more important because it calls for creative qualities of mind rather than adjustment into established order and custom. This is revealed both in the runes, (8) found in all of northern Europe but mostly in the Scandinavian peninsula, and in the sensitivity to art which, undoubtedly, paved the way for Gothic architecture. (9) In particular it is revealed in the establishment of "things," - forms of local government, based upon early concepts of principles of democracy.

Two settlements of this type will be discussed - the Isle of Man and Iceland.

The Isle of Man was settled by a Celtic people before the invasion of the Northmen, in the beginning of the ninth century. According to Arthur W. Moore, author of "A History of the Isle of Man," there is "no trustworthy record of any event whatever before the incursions of



the Northmen."<sup>(10)</sup> The only conclusion that can be reached is that the Celtic settlement was small and that the Northmen took complete charge of the island.

The man who laid the foundation for government in the Isle of Man is the Norseman, Godred Crovan, known in many legends under the name of King Gorse or Orry.<sup>(11)</sup> He took possession in 1079 and the islands under his rule were called Sudur-eyjar, as distinguished from the Nordur-eyjar, the Orkneys and the Faroe Islands.

As the Celtic influence had disappeared the political institutions are of Norse origin. The present lower house of the legislature, known as the House of Keys, "is one of the most ancient legislative assemblies in the world."<sup>(12)</sup> Originally the assembly met in the open on Tynwald Hill. "Tynwald" is from the Old Norse "Thing-vóllr". Now the Upper and Lower House sit in Tynwald Court.

Iceland, previously uninhabited, was settled in the period 874-930. A majority of the settlers came from present Norway. They were "Odalsmenn", who might be termed "landed gentry". Each one of these Vikings travelled in his own ship and as a rule there were about forty persons on board each ship. Gjerset says:<sup>(13)</sup>

"As the 'landnamsmenn' (the settlers) were persons of rank and influence in their home districts, they were accompanied not only by their families but by a number of friends, relatives, freedman, servants and slaves."

In 930, Althing, the Parliament of Iceland, was established and has continued ever since. It was modelled upon the Gulathing in ancient





Norway but very soon became a legislative-judicial body with distinct characteristics of its own.

Then there were the Norse irruptions during the Viking period which do not clearly fall into the two categories already dealt with. The Irish coast was occupied from Dublin around the south coast to the River Shannon. There were permanent settlements in the north of Ireland and Scotland, and in central England was the Danelaw which reached out over a large part of present England in the days of Canute.

In none of these cases was there a complete absorption as in the Ukraine and in Normandy, nor a real beginning, as in the Isle of Man and Iceland. To describe what took place the modern use of the word "integrate" appears to be the most appropriate. These peoples, because of a common Nordic ancestry and an innate readiness to integrate, very soon found themselves commingling with the Angles, the Saxons and other Nordic groups from north-central Europe. Together they constitute the basic elements of the English people. The Celts are an added, rather than an original, ingredient.

### Chapter 11 - The Commingling Process

The reader may properly ask: Why a background a thousand years' old to present-day contributions to the building of the Canadian nation?

One of our Canadian Icelandic poets, Th. T. Thorsteinsson, who was an historian as well, said:<sup>(14)</sup>





"The story of the Icelanders in the West, and their future, will have indelibly writ upon it the story of the forces of destiny which has been emblazoned upon the nation's countenance, its outward expression its very soul, for a thousand years."

Similar forces of destiny have emblazoned upon the countenance of other nations the outward expression of the finest in the spirit which prompted that "uncontrollable impulse" to which Edmund Curtis refers. Evidence of that outward expression can be seen in the Ukraine, in Northern Ireland, in the North of France, even in New France of America. But it can be seen more clearly in the English people. It was in England, where the intermingling took place, of the Anglo-Saxon and the Norse elements of the larger Indo-European group, whom G.M. Trevelyan<sup>(15)</sup> prefers to call the Nordics rather than Teutons.

Beowulf is the best example of the common relationship. That story, the greatest and the most precious of the Anglo-Saxon epic poems, brings out the blending of fierceness and humane qualities which characterized the ancient Nordic peoples. Watt's-Dunton<sup>(16)</sup> wrote of the Epic of Beowulf:

"This Beowulf is simply the type of fierce, yet tender and even homely, sea-heroes of England, who have made her what she is - the father of Drake and Grenville, of Blake and of Nelson - this Beowulf, whose exploits belong to English poetry alone."

Annexed to this essay is an extract from the writer's book, "The Saskatchewan Icelanders, A Strand of the Canadian Fabric," in which he enlarges upon the common characteristics. (Appendix 1)

The same original characteristics and qualities of mind, were equally transmitted and retained elsewhere. Beowulf, son of athane of the King of the Geats, is no more the father of Drake and of Nelson than



Rurik and Askold are of the Ukrainians, Ottar of Gustavus Adolphus and Charles XII, Rollo of the Normans, and Count Roger the father of La Verendrye. The process has continued, has crossed the Atlantic and is continuing here. In a letter written by an American, who is one-quarter Norwegian, a scholar and great reader, is an excellent summation of what is taking place:

"One of our new typists is an Iowa Iclander and we share my copy of The Icelandic Canadian. She says that her father had many Icelandic books and was a great reader in the cold midwest winters. I think her father typifies the answer, at least one answer to the question: 'What will enable Icelanders to survive outside of Iceland?' I think it is the intense historical and ethnic interest in their race which I've noticed in Scandinavians and in myself, although I am only one-quarter Norwegian! There are more than 200,000 Icelanders. There are millions of Icelanders and Norwegians who live in America that are citizens of the U. S. A. or Canada, but when one talks to them, what kind of people are they really? They are Icelandic or Norse or Finnish or half or part Scandinavian! This ethnic root strength may be as strong among the Jewish or Italian or Chinese as among us, but the Icelanders, with the protection of isolation and the other Scandinavians without protection, have weathered the change from the Old Norse Gods through early Christianity to modern Christianity, from the old Viking spirit to the calm of social democracy." (17)

The fruit which the Canadian cultural tree is to bear will draw its flavor, its colour, its richness, from roots that run deep in many directions.





## PART TWO

### THE ICELANDIC CONTRIBUTION

#### Chapter I - Emigration from Iceland

The contribution of the Icelandic settlers is dealt with first, and at more length, than that of the other four Scandinavian groups. This must not be interpreted to rest upon any difference in the general nature of their contribution. It rests upon the fact that Icelanders came from an island where they had more or less lived unto themselves for a thousand years. Hence they present a clearer picture of the ancient Scandinavian or Norse way of life than the others and at the same time combine with the others in revealing the present Scandinavian mind in action.

Unrelated though the events may appear to be, the fundamental cause of the migration from Iceland to America is the same that caused the landed gentry, Odalsmenn, of Norway to leave their abodes and sail for Iceland. It has often been said that they left because they refused to be subjects of Harald, the Hairfair. That is only part of the reason. They, no less than other Norsemen, had that "uncontrollable impulse" to which Curtis refers.

So, also, it has been said that the Icelanders migrated from Iceland during the three last decades of the nineteenth century because of the constant ice-floes, lack of fish in the cold ocean waters, poor





pasturage, inclement weather and disease, both in humans and domestic animals. This aggravated the situation and hastened the emigration, but the motivation was more deep-rooted and fundamental.

The underlying cause may be found in an excerpt from an article (in Icelandic) by Jónas Jónsson frá Hriflu.<sup>(1)</sup> The following is a loosely translated excerpt from the article:

"Many of the people of Iceland from time immemorial have been accustomed to leadership and the milieu of aristocracy. Poverty had, however, pressed closely for many centuries. Through all the centuries a spark glowed in the embers. Even though the Icelanders are the smallest nation in the world, and undoubtedly the poorest, there does not exist in any other country the strong desire to live in an atmosphere of aristocracy."

Atmosphere of aristocracy! That is the logical resultant of the spirit that prevailed in the landed gentry of their forefathers. The immigrants to Canada a thousand years later demonstrated it in two ways. None of them showed the slightest resentment to the cruelty, at times, of the elements in Iceland. They loved Iceland dearly and brought part of it with them - in their hearts and in their precious books. What Governor General Lord Dufferin discovered in the first settlement Nýja-Ísland, applies to all the districts:

"I have not entered a single hut or cottage in the settlement which did not contain, no matter how bare its walls, or scanty its furniture, a library of twenty or thirty books."<sup>(2)</sup>

The deeper reason for the migrations can also be seen in the statements of the pioneers to their children when they grew up and began to ask questions. Life was not easy in the settlements and the children



of the pioneers had to work very hard. If, as did happen to the writer's personal knowledge, a child or young man asked why the Icelanders had come to America, the answer was not, "adventure, to make money, win fame and glory." The invariable answer a parent gave was something like this: "We left in order to give you and your brothers and sisters an opportunity to acquire an education." "Fara menntaveginn" were the words used. An English approximation is "cultural learning."

Education was to our immigrant fathers and mothers the key to the cultural aristocracy Jónasson speaks of, and they were determined that an opportunity would be provided to their children to acquire this cultural learning. The objective they told their children, as they toiled themselves and asked them to labour as well, was to go "menntaveginn," or the way of culture.<sup>(3)</sup>

Their pleas to their children sank deep and aroused in them a determination which gave rise to a record of high school and university achievement which, percentage-wise, has never been equalled. That record will be dealt with separately.

A very recent article on the Icelanders in Canada under the caption, "Icelanders in Canada, a Dynamic Component," published in "Man and Migration,"<sup>(4)</sup> discusses the causes of the Icelandic migrations and concludes with these striking words:

"Interestingly enough, there was a cultural factor behind the emigration also, the Viking tradition of the Icelanders, still very real to them, which was restless, questing, and eager to move on to new adventures."

The immediate new adventure is Canadian unity.





## Chapter 11 - The First Icelandic Settlement

The first permanent Icelandic settlement in Canada, and in fact the main Icelandic rural settlement in North America, was on the west shore of Lake Winnipeg in Manitoba, originally very appropriately named, "Nýja-Island," New-Iceland.

There were three attempts at Icelandic settlement in Canada before the Lake Winnipeg district was selected. A group, which came in 1873, divided. Some settled in the Rousseau district, not far from Lake Muskoka in Ontario. The others pushed on to Wisconsin. (A small settlement had been established in 1872 on Washington Island in Lake Michigan). In 1874 a small group settled in Nova Scotia and remained there for a few years.

A large group of Icelandic settlers reached Quebec in September 1874. They moved on to Toronto and from there to Kinmount, about 100 miles northeast of Toronto, where they stayed over the winter.

The man in charge of this group was Sigtryggur Jónasson, a young man of 21. He had learned to speak English back in Iceland and had studied both the British and the American forms of government. He preferred the British system and that may be why he, by himself, came to Canada in 1872 when others were going to the United States. Because of his command of English he was placed in charge of the large 1874 group and John Taylor, a Dominion Lands and Settlement Agent, was assigned to assist him. The group had originally intended to go to Wisconsin but



both John Taylor and Sigtryggur Jónasson urged them to stay in Canada.

Both the Rousseau and the Kinmount districts proved most unsatisfactory to the Icelandic immigrants so Jónasson and Taylor, with three of the immigrants, decided to investigate the reported boom in the Red River Valley of the West and reached Winnipeg on July 16, 1875.

The intent was to settle in the Red River Valley not far from Winnipeg.

Unfortunately, but from one point of view, as will be disclosed later, fortunately, this happened to be a time when the terrible grasshopper plague was at its worst. A reliable report from an eye-witness<sup>(5)</sup> is as follows:

"The grasshopper plague was the most terrible experience. When these flying myriads crashed in Winnipeg the sun disappeared. They were loaded upon wagons on Main Street. On the banks of the rivers they were in windrows four feet high. "

All vegetation in the surrounding district had been eaten up so the party of five decided to go elsewhere. They went north to the west shore of Lake Winnipeg and came to the conclusion that here was an excellent location.

The advance agents went back, gathered together the settlers in Ontario and the group, about 275 in number, proceeded west and arrived in Winnipeg on October 11, 1875. A few found work in Winnipeg and remained behind. The rest, about 250 in number, left Winnipeg on October 17th, travelling by york boats, and reached Willow Point, about 4 miles from present Gimli, on October 21, 1875.<sup>(6)</sup>





A much larger group of Icelandic immigrants, between 700 and 800 in number, arrived in Winnipeg on August 8th the following year. They went further north, to the mouth of the river which was named Icelandic River, and landed on the bank of the river close to what is now Riverton.

The action of this first group of Icelanders during the next few years constitutes the clearest modern evidence of the Norse mind in action, and is a most unique episode revealing the Icelandic, (actually the old Norse) mind in action. It must be dealt with by itself.

### Chapter 111 - Nýja-Island

Many circumstances had to combine to make Nýja-Island (New-Iceland) possible, or rather to make possible an imprint and an image of a deep-rooted characteristic and outlook which a few hundred settlers created during a span of only a few years.

a, The people of Iceland had preserved the ancient Norse concept of freedom and individualism, the attitude of mental aristocracy which later found expression in "islenzk menning" or Icelandic culture.

b, The settlement was not within the boundaries, at that time, of Manitoba. It was in the District of Keewatin, carved out of the North-West Territories.

c, The area was unoccupied and unorganized.

d, It was part of Canada and hence subject to laws within federal powers.



The image created centres upon "The Laws and Regulations of New-Iceland," but there are other factors which contributed to the image.

The first settlers reached Willow Point in October, 1875. Early in 1876 one of the settlers, Jón Gudmundson, began distributing a handwritten paper which he edited. He carried it from house to house and read it or had it read to others. Five numbers were published. (7)

During the winter of 1875-76 John Taylor preached in English and one of the settlers, Fridjon Fredrikson, stood beside him and translated. Early in 1876 a public school was started, primarily to teach English, which all were anxious to learn. The teacher was Caroline (Carrie) Taylor, a niece of John Taylor. Young men and women, as well as children attended. One of the pupils learned very fast and was able to propose marriage to Carrie which she accepted.

A tragic misfortune fell upon the settlers in September 1876. Smallpox broke out and raged through the district and did not fully subside until the summer of 1877. About a third of the settlers caught the disease and there were over a hundred deaths. (8)

Aside from the immediate task of eking out an existence, and in spite of the smallpox disaster, these freedom-loving settlers were determined to draft and enact laws and regulations for the settlement. It is as if they had carried in their bosoms the spirit of the landed gentry who sailed to uninhabited Iceland about a thousand years before. And this is important: these men were fully aware of their powers in their Icelandic Reserve, (9) and the limitations upon those powers.





Early in 1877 a meeting was held to draft laws and regulations for a local government. Many meetings were held before the final draft was completed. In September, a printed paper called Framfari (Progress) began publishing in Lundi, now Riverton, and on January 14, 1878 the finalized Laws and Regulations of New-Iceland were published and proclaimed in Framfari. The full text, in translation by this writer, was published in The Icelandic Canadian, Vol. 21, No. 2, a copy of which is filed with this essay.

The following are pertinent comments on these Laws and Regulations: In the draft the name of the settlement is Nyja Island (New-Iceland), but in the published record it is hyphenated, Nyja-Island. One can easily understand why the change was made. The settlers did not want to convey the idea that they were creating another Iceland but that they were creating a Canadian settlement, which they named "Nyja-Island." What they did create was a combination of a province and a municipality.

The qualifications for the franchise, Article III, read as follows:

"Every man shall have the right to vote for the election of District Committee who is eighteen years of age, is a resident or owns real estate, or who is a householder, or has steady employment in the district, and who has an unblemished record."

The age limit for voting in Iceland at the time was 25, and is now 21. These men made a decision to reduce the age limit to 18 - a subject of debate in Canada at the present time. They also



tackled in a very interesting, though perhaps somewhat impracticable way, <sup>(10)</sup> a problem which the free world may some day have to deal with - modification of adult suffrage.

The words "steady employment" indicate how deeply the settlers loathed indifference and idleness.

The present principles of conciliation of labour disputes did not enter into the Canadian statute books until about half a century later. The settlers contemplated the settlement of all private disputes by conciliation.

One of the most revealing sections in the Laws and Regulations is Section 5 of Article XIV:

"Section 5: Reporting Matters to the Government of Canada. He (the Regional Governor) shall refer to the Government of Canada all matters that concern the Region and are required to be referred; and shall notify the District Reeves of all its directives insofar as they concern the Region."

The value of these Laws and Regulations does not lie in their content but in the revelation they provide of the deep-rooted Norse sense of the rule of law and the democratic process which was preserved by the people of Iceland and found expression as soon as the first group of Icelandic immigrants established a settlement of their own in an area which was unorganized territory.

#### Chapter 1V - Guttormur J. Guttormsson

The literary bent of these settlers which caused them, as Lord Dufferin said, to bring with them their precious books, and the





inspiration provided, as foundations were being laid for a way of life where freedom reigns, were bound to create an atmosphere where the gift of the poet would develop to the full. Such proved to be the case and, as if to make the setting ideal, the poet was born at Lundi the very year the Laws and Regulations became law.

Guttormur J. Guttormsson is the outward expression of the combined subconscious mind of the New-Iceland settlement. He grew with it, suffered with it, rejoiced with it - one of the victors. His first book of poetry, "Jón Austfirdingur," is really a condensed history of the first immigrants, revealing a deep understanding of these people, portrayed alike in pictures of sadness and humour. His masterpiece is "Sandy Bar," an elegy to the pioneers, "who emigrated, suffered, and gave their lives without gaining visible victory." The final stanza (in inadequate translation by the writer) follows:

"Breaks the storm, the sky is clearing,  
Starry canopy appearing,  
Wide a way, to heaven nearing,  
Winds are sweeping from afar.  
Bolts of lightning, bursting, rifting  
Banks of clouds to northward drifting;  
Starlit, clear, the silvery heaven  
All enshrines on Sandy Bar.  
Heaven, shelter of the settlers,  
Softly gleams on Sandy Bar."

#### Chapter V - The City of Winnipeg

Space does not permit any lengthy discussion of the development of the Icelandic community in Winnipeg. Only those matters will be referred to which provide leads to what in the future



will be the permanent pattern. By way of introduction the words of Dr. E. A. Freeman on the Normans may be slightly changed and shortened:

"Everywhere they are gradually losing themselves among the people of Canada. But at the same time they are strengthening the national life and the cultural values and usages in the land which has become their native land."

#### a. The Churches

Most of the Icelanders are Lutherans, the others Unitarians. At first all services were conducted in Icelandic. For a number of years the morning services in The First Lutheran Church have been in English and the Sunday School as well. Many of the members are "mixed" that is, one of Icelandic descent and one of some other descent. (11)

The evening services are still conducted in Icelandic, but the attendance is small and dwindling, almost all quite elderly people.

The Unitarian Church has virtually passed into the hands of non-Icelanders. The Icelandic minister resigned last year but still performs some marriages and conducts funeral services for old adherents who are rapidly passing away.

#### b. The Cultural Organizations

There are two cultural organizations in Winnipeg: The Icelandic National League and The Icelandic Canadian Club. The former has one annual meeting attended by about fifty people, the average age





being over seventy. The meeting is conducted in Icelandic. A Chapter of the League "Frón," meets very infrequently, its main function being the Annual Concert which also is conducted in Icelandic. The League was established in 1919.

The Icelandic Canadian Club was established in 1938 and meets quite regularly. All meetings are conducted in English. It has more members and is more active now than at any time in its history.

### c. Publications

Framfari was published in New-Iceland for three years, 1877-1880, and was succeeded by Leifur, published in Winnipeg. It, in turn, was succeeded, in 1886, by two weeklies, Heimskringla and Logberg, which in some respects competed against each other but joined hands in their encouragement of the maintenance of the Icelandic cultural heritage. They amalgamated in 1959. Prior to that time items in English appeared very seldom in either paper but now, news items, public addresses, and even articles on the editorial page, in English, appear quite regularly.

In 1942 The Icelandic Canadian was launched, a quarterly, wholly in the English language. It had become evident that only through a medium in the English language could the younger people be reached. The last number, Summer 1965, is filed with this essay as an example of how such a publication can be, at once, a Canadian and an Icelandic publication. This magazine may well be the forerunner of similar publications in the case of other ethnic groups.



All this leads to one conclusion. The Icelandic tongue has ceased to be the language of the home or in the social and cultural activities of Canadians of Icelandic origin. A Department of Icelandic had to be established in the University of Manitoba, where Icelandic can be taught as a cultural subject in the Humanities. Inevitably, that Department will in time become the focal point from which all Icelandic cultural activities will draw their strength and inspiration. How it came to be established is an inspiring story and is dealt with in the following Chapter.

## Chapter VI - The Chair in Icelandic

### a. Early Teaching of Icelandic

Right from the beginning of Icelandic settlement in America it was realized that some institution of learning would have to be established at which the language would be taught and the student given a glimpse at Icelandic literature and made acquainted with the main events in the history of Iceland. The first clear and resounding voice was that of Freeman B. Anderson, back in 1884,<sup>(12)</sup> Leifur, Second issue, page 40.

Teaching of Icelandic at Wesley College in Winnipeg, now United College, was commenced in 1901, instruction being given up to Second Year Arts. This continued to 1927.

In 1913 the Lutheran Synod opened a Secondary School which, in the following year, was named Jon Bjarnason Academy. During the first years all the students were of Icelandic origin but through the years



that began to change and by 1930 only about half of the students were of Icelandic origin. When the school closed in 1940 the percentage of Icelandic students was very small.

b. Steps leading to the Establishment of the  
Chair

One of the main objectives of the Icelandic National League, organized in 1919, was to encourage the teaching of Icelandic on a non-sectarian basis and at the University of Manitoba.

Impetus was given to the movement in 1932 when Dr. Sigurdur Nordal<sup>(13)</sup> addressed a group of about forty, then young Icelanders, in the home of this writer. He advocated that emphasis be placed upon the close relationship of Anglo-Saxon and Old Norse as foundations to modern English. This fell upon the attentive ears of those who years before had studied Icelandic at Wesley College. A Committee of five was formed, of which the writer was Chairman, to study ways and means of raising a capital fund of one hundred thousand dollars, the interest to be used to finance a professorship in Icelandic at the University.

A number of meetings were held by the Committee and, as a result of those meetings, two principles were laid down:

- 1) that the project be not launched until the full one hundred thousand dollars had been received in cash or in promises, all monies collected to be returned if the objective were not reached;
- 2) that encouragement should be given to the making of wills which included gifts to the project. This was at the height of the depression and it was deemed advisable to hold the collection campaign in abeyance for the time being.





Some wills came into existence containing provision for such gifts. In 1937 Magnus Hinrikson died leaving a gift of three thousand dollars to the project - the first gift to what later became the Department of Icelandic in the University of Manitoba.

c. The "Chair in Icelandic" Committee.

From 1932 to 1945 various addresses were made and ad hoc committees formed, to study the project. One of these committees was headed by Dr. P.H. T. Thorlakson and in 1945 he made a personal gift of five thousand dollars. The late A.P. Johannson had made it known privately that he was prepared to make a donation of fifty thousand dollars, if a few reasonably well-to-do-men were prepared to match his generous offer. He repeated this offer openly in 1945. Early in 1947 a definite committee was established under the self-imposed stipulation that no one could become a member without pledging a minimum of one thousand dollars and thus become a Founder of the Chair of Icelandic Language and Literature at the University of Manitoba. The first six people to give such an undertaking were Dr. P.H. T. Thorlakson, who had already qualified, Miss Margaret Petursson, Judge W.J. Lindal, Grettir L. Johannson, who represented his father, A.P. Johannson, Arni G. Eggertson, Q.C., and Dr. L.A. Sigurdson, and they became the permanent Foundation Committee. Dr. Thorlakson was immediately made Chairman and, later, Miss Petursson was appointed Secretary, and this writer Vice-Chairman. The minimum objective of one hundred thousand dollars was raised to



one hundred and fifty thousand dollars but the qualification of one thousand dollars for foundershship was strictly adhered to, the only modification being that group-founders could be formed, and donations could be made in any amount to each founder-group.

#### d. The Campaign

The campaign succeeded beyond all expectations and a total of \$206,652.25 was collected. The following incident is an excellent example of the unshakeable determination of the Icelandic people to preserve their Icelandic (or Norse) heritage and their readiness to support the vital step that had to be taken - the establishment of a Department of Icelandic on a self-perpetuating basis.

The writer's territory was mostly in the rural areas. One of those visited was a farmer, an "Odalsman" or "landed gentry" of today. He had four children; the older two could talk some Icelandic, the younger two hardly a word. When the subject of the one thousand dollar contribution was mentioned, he said:

"Everything Icelandic is precious to me, but it is fast disappearing. First, after we were married, my wife and I spoke Icelandic, now hardly ever; the mother tongue is disappearing."

The reply was obvious: "The Icelandic language is disappearing in your home. Now we are going to erect a new home for it. Learned men will graduate from the university who will become standard bearers for all that you feel you are losing."

He hesitated, then said: "That is the only permanent step to take; you may put my name down for a Founder."

The establishment of the Chair in Icelandic in the University of





Manitoba is an exceedingly important cultural development. Not only will Icelandic-Canadian Organizations draw strength from it but all Scandinavian organizations as well. It will help put Old Norse on the same basis in Canadian universities as in the universities of Britain. Finally, as a Nordic mother-culture,<sup>(14)</sup> Icelandic (or Norse) will give Canadian culture the wider base it needs to fulfil its destined potentialities.

### Chapter VII - Stephan G. Stephansson

In 1888 a few Icelanders who had settled in North Dakota decided to go to a district not far from Red Deer in Alberta. A few more came in 1889, including a man, thirty-six years of age, Stephan G. Stephansson. He was born in the north of Iceland, migrated to Wisconsin in 1873, and moved on to North Dakota in 1880 and to Alberta in 1889, and homesteaded in the area now known as the Markerville District. All that need be said about the district is that Stephan G. Stephansson lived there from 1889 until he died in 1927. He is the acknowledged peer of the Icelandic poets of America. Dr. Watson Kirkconnell, who reads Icelandic and most of Europe's languages, and is very familiar with Stephansson's poetry, regards him as Canada's leading poet. "He was a man of transcendent gifts of spirit. In him there was an uncontrollable urgency of creation."<sup>(15)</sup>

Stephansson represents the finest in the Icelandic immigrant and, indeed, in the Canadians of Icelandic descent, who as he applies himself to his Canadian tasks, once in a while pauses and lets his mind



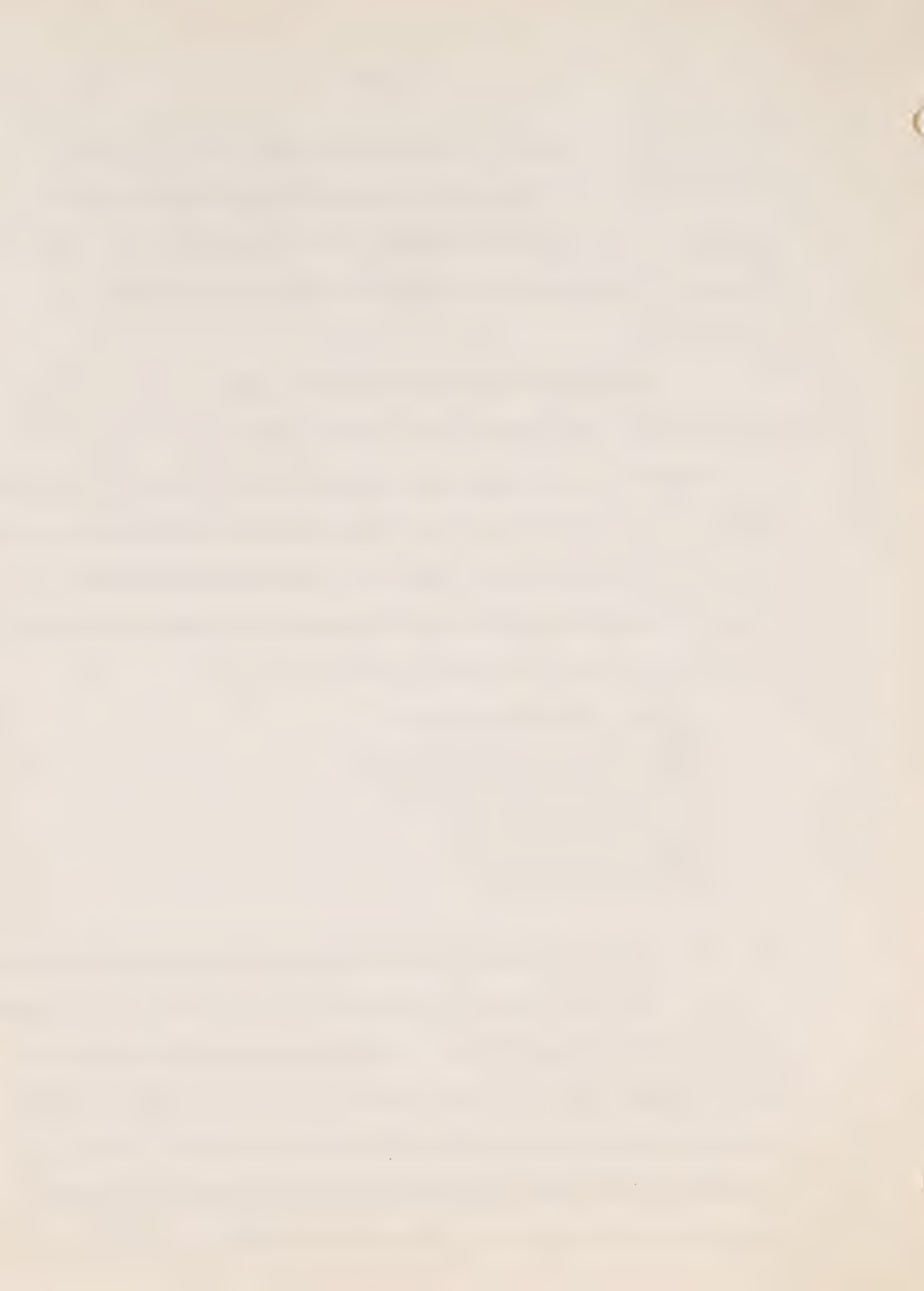
wander back to the distant blue of the island whence his parents came. In his surroundings in the foothills Stephansson felt the freedom of the wide open prairies and saw the majesty of the Canadian Rockies. "No Canadian, in any language, has excelled his portrayal of Canadian landscape." (16)

Stephansson rose to starry heights when his mind, as he lay awake at night, which was his wont, travelled back to his old island home. He finds that he is still much a part of Iceland. His masterpiece is a poem of three verses, part of an address he delivered at an Icelandic Celebration Day in 1904, when he had been thirty-one years away from his land of birth. The poem, in an inadequate translation by the writer, is Appendix 111 to this essay, but the first verse is repeated here:

Though in travels far distant  
Many lands you may roam,  
Your thoughts and your feelings  
Bear the stamp of your home.  
The mountains, the geysers,  
The clear ocean blue,  
The falls and the valleys  
Are all cousins to you.

#### Chapter VIII - A Panoramic View of the Icelandic Settlements

The following may be stated as the pattern during the first years that prevailed in all the districts: to build temporary shelters and later more permanent homes; to build a school; to erect a "fundarhús," that is a hall for community meetings; to ask for itinerant ministers and as soon as possible to build churches; establish community libraries, first only Icelandic books and later other books; and to maintain a community spirit



through concerts and actual Icelandic plays.

a. The Nova Scotia Settlement

In the summer of 1876 a group of about eighty Icelanders landed in Halifax and settled on the banks of the Mosquidobit River where there was heavy timber. These people were not accustomed to the felling of timber and carving out plots of land in wooded areas. In 1882 the settlers heard about the big boom in the west and left the following June. The area they left is now fruitland.

b. The Argyle District

The first Icelandic farming settlement was in an area a little over a hundred miles south-west of Winnipeg between present Glenboro and Baldur. The district was ideally suited for mixed farming and "Argyle," as the district was called, was for many years the leading Icelandic rural district. Settlement began in 1880.

The character of the people who settled in this premier Icelandic district can best be described by a reference to the Reformation Society, "Sidabótafélagid," established in 1884. The object of the society was to improve social behavior and strengthen Christianity. Its main provisions are in Appendix 11 to this essay.

In view of the stringent provisions in the rules it is amazing that they were passed at a public meeting. That the society should endure for only a year is understandable, but it was succeeded by a Good Templars Chapter which prohibited the use of alcoholic beverages.





c. The Districts in the North-West Territories

Three early Icelandic settlements opened in 1886 and 1887, two in the area between present Calder and Churchbridge,<sup>(17)</sup> and one close to present Tantallon. This was then unorganized territory. Gunnar Johannesson, writing in the Almanak of 1954<sup>(18)</sup> said:

"After the settlers had erected a covering for their heads and taken some steps in arranging things about them, they realized that the first step to be taken as an immediate necessity was to erect a school for the children."

In the Tantallon district, called "Hólar," it was decided that teaching should commence even before a school was built. The Holar district followed Gimli in that one of the settlers, Jón Hjaltalin, issued a hand-written paper which he took from house to house or read at the hall, which had already been built.

What characterized the Icelanders in these and other districts was their determination to make good. They had to learn the language, English, and farming methods. To acquire cash they worked for farmers in nearby districts or on the railroad, which by that time had reached Langenburg. Typical of the few complaints made about the Icelanders was that of a farmer in the Kimbrae district who said that "these d--- Icelanders ask too many questions."

In the fall of 1888 a young man, Gudbrandur Narfason, was working on the railroad near Langenburg. He had promised to work to freeze-up. He was engaged to Anna, a daughter of another pioneer, Ingimundur Inge. Word reached the settlement that a preacher,



Rev. Jon Bjarnason, would be in the district in October. There were three other engaged couples in the district and the hall was about eighteen miles from where Gudbrandur worked. He asked for leave of absence and was granted only one day, as the season was getting late. After work the day before the wedding he walked the eighteen miles. The four couples were married next day. Shortly after the evening meal Gudbrandur left and was at work next morning at seven o'clock!

#### d. The Pacific Coast

The parents of the late Hon. Byron Ingemar Johnson were probably the earliest settlers in British Columbia. Byron was born in Victoria, December 10, 1890, and he is the only Iclander - or Scandinavian - who has become the Premier of a province of Canada (1947 to 1952).

In 1905 there were about twenty Icelandic families in Vancouver and adjacent areas.

The number has gradually increased and there are approximately six thousand people of Icelandic extraction in British Columbia now.

Mrs. Emily Thorson, a graduate of the University of Manitoba, whose father moved to Vancouver, in an unpublished article, reveals to a remarkable degree the inevitable trend of integration in Canada.<sup>(19)</sup>

"An Icelandic Lutheran Church was built in Vancouver and for a number of years all the services were in Icelandic. When it became impossible to get an Icelandic pastor the church came under new management; the name was changed to the Evangelical Church of Christ and all services





are conducted in English.

"An Icelandic library was started early and when 'Ströndin,' a Chapter of the Icelandic National League, was formed it took over the library. Formerly meetings of Ströndin were conducted in Icelandic; now they are conducted in English and meetings are very irregular.

"I think the most noteworthy achievement of the Icelandic group here is the new Icelandic Old Folks Home, named 'Höfn.'<sup>(20)</sup> It has taken over the library from Ströndin and has a collection of over two thousand books."

#### e. The Saskatchewan Lakes District

It is the largest of the Icelandic settlements and stretches from Foam Lake to Dafoe. The eastern part of the district was settled early. Because of drought three families moved from the Thingvalla district in 1892 close to what was then a huge hay meadow, Foam Lake. The main trek to the Saskatchewan Lake District did not commence until 1905 and continued for about four years. The two central towns are Foam Lake and Wynyard.

#### f. The Settlements around Lake Manitoba

These settlements stretch from Oak Point to Steep Rock on the east side. On the west side there is a settlement centering on Langruth and much further north and west is a settlement in and near Winnipegosis.

The southern part of the district on the east side became



especially well known for the number of first class field athletes it developed. Some of them, undoubtedly, were of Olympic potential but the needed training facilities were not available.

g. West Selkirk

Ever since the Gimli district was opened there have been Icelanders in Selkirk. In 1900 the number of Icelanders in Selkirk was seven hundred.

Chapter IX - The First Generation of Icelandic Canadians

The first generation of Icelanders established two unique, and absolutely unparalleled records. One was in the field of education and the other in athletics. This astounding success rests primarily upon a deep resolve which found expression in two ways, or in a twofold determination: that the children would acquire an education, and become part of a cultural aristocracy; that they and their children, no matter how hard the struggle or arduous the task, would make good. This determination the immigrant fathers and mothers exemplified in word and action. They worked hard and their children worked hard. There were no luxuries nor time wasted in frivolities or a degrading waste of leisure hours. All this sank deep in the minds of these first Icelandic Canadian children. They grew up sound of mind and with healthy bodies. They were prepared for any strain no matter how much it taxed their energies.

a. The Students of the Period 1900 to 1914

These students were not afraid of hard work which had been



their lot from the time they were small children. They felt that a responsibility rested upon them to carry on from their pioneer fathers and mothers. Their sacrifice was not to be in vain.

At the same time, birth was being given to another feeling - a feeling of affection for the land in which they lived.

These students entered Wesley College with a determination that the knowledge and training they acquired would be worthy alike of their ancestry and their new homeland.

During those fourteen years the Icelandic students established a record for scholarship which, from the point of view of numbers, has never been equalled. Close to fifty percent of the graduates of that period received medals or their equivalent. There were four Icelandic graduates in each of the years 1907 to 1911 and they all received medals. The undergraduate record of scholarships was equally high.

#### b. The Olympic World Champions Hockey Team

Although the children of the first settlers were quick to learn games played in Canada, lack of space makes it impossible to refer to sports other than hockey, and only in Winnipeg. Many vacant lots had a skating rink and the boys learned to skate and rag the puck at any early age.

Actual competition in hockey began after the Icelanders in West Winnipeg had formed athletic clubs: the Icelandic Athletic Club in the north part of west Winnipeg and the Vikings in the south. The first





game was played on a Sunday in March, 1896 on an open air rink on the Assiniboine River at the foot of Kennedy Street. Keen competition continued between these two teams until 1909 when it was decided that the two teams amalgamate and one team was formed called The Winnipeg Falcons. At first they played in junior ranks and later played senior amateur hockey.

In the winter of 1919 and 1920 the Falcons won the Canadian championship, played in Toronto. This automatically qualified them to compete in the first Olympic Winter Sports, held in Antwerp, Belgium. The Falcons won every game and became the first Olympic World Hockey Champions.

The following are very significant facts:

All the players in that world championship team, with one exception, were sons of Icelandic pioneer parents and they all were born in Manitoba, with the exception of one, who was born in Saskatchewan. The Falcon Hockey team enlisted in a body in the 223rd Battalion in 1916. After the war a couple of juniors, who were too young to enlist, qualified for the senior team which won the world championship.

#### Chapter X - The Continuing Cultural Aristocracy

The conclusion reached by an Englishman in 1929, after he had dwelt among the Icelanders in the Wynyard district in Saskatchewan for some time and observed them in action, is very convincing evidence of the continuity of that feeling of cultural aristocracy traceable from the



settlers in Iceland a thousand years ago, down through the centuries in that remote island, to the Icelandic immigrants in America, who were passing it on half a century after Icelandic settlement began.

Mr. Horace Leap, in "Iceland Yesterday and Today," an English author who has travelled extensively in at least twenty foreign countries, said:

"My first acquaintance with Icelanders was at Wynyard, Saskatchewan, Canada, in the summer of 1929. They were a farming community, wringing a precarious living from the soil, in a climate sometimes warmer, sometimes colder than that of the native land. All of them bore the impress of their arduous tasks; but they were an intelligent people, deeply interested in psychological, philosophical and religious problems. It was this that marked them off from the great majority of farmers in the land of their adoption. Canadians are, as a whole, a materialistically-minded people, filled with a belief in the physical greatness of their country and enamoured of its business and industrial prospects."

Mr. Leap saw in those Icelandic Canadian farmers of Wynyard qualities of mind which have established for the Icelandic people an enviable record. As these qualities of mind diffuse they will add cultural enrichment to Canada.

His Excellency, John P. Sigvaldason, Canada's Ambassador to Norway and Iceland, may be looked upon as a prototype of that ancient, yet present, Icelandic (or Norse) cultural aristocracy.





## PART THREE

### THE FINNISH CONTRIBUTION

#### Chapter I - The Distant Background

Strange though it may appear, the contribution of the Finns to the Canadian way of life rests largely upon how Finland came into existence. The somewhat unique evolution of this modern nation has brought about two results:

- (1) the people, a large majority of whom are of Finno-Ugrian origin - farther back Mongolian - have acquired the characteristics of the other four Scandinavian nations;
- (2) in Finland there are two official languages, Finnish and Swedish.

How the latter came about must be briefly stated. The word Finnish has a much wider connotation than what is implied in the word Finland. If the adjective Finnic or Finno-Ugrian is used it extends to a division of the Ural-Altaic family of languages. Dr. Edmund Gosse, in Encyclopedia Brittanica, Vol. X., says:

"Many of these physical and moral characteristics they have in common with the so-called 'Mongolian Race,' to which they are no doubt ethnically, if not also, linguistically related....."

On the Finno-Ugrians generally, Dr. Gosse says:

"They are patient, persevering, industrious, faithful and honest. When their natural mistrust of strangers is overcome they are kindly and hospitable."

The Finno-Ugrians or Finno-Ugrics were nomadic tribes who



shunned the steppes of present Russia and preferred the woodlands to the north, so there can be no doubt that the people of northern Russia and the people on the east side of the Baltic Sea, are kindred of the Finns. Incidentally, one of these Finno-Ugrian groups reached what is present Hungary. This accounts for the basic similarity of the Finnish and Hungarian languages and their total difference to the Slavic group of languages.

In 1157, King Eric of Sweden, accompanied by the Bishop of Upsala, Henry, (reported to be an Englishman), with a relatively large army invaded Finland and soon overcame all resistance from the scattered unorganized tribes. The country was, however, not finally conquered until 1323 because of resistance from Russia, as well as from within.

Dr. Gosse continues:

"After the final conquest of the country by the Swedes, they spread among the Finlanders their civilization, gave them laws, accorded them the same civil rights as belonged to themselves, and introduced agriculture and other beneficial arts."

King Gustavus Adolphus, early in the 17th century, established the Diet of Finland and founded schools, gymnasia, and churches. Peter the Great, of Russia, sought to wrestle Finland from Sweden and was partly successful. The struggle between Russia and Sweden for possession of Finland continued until 1809, when the whole of Finland and the Åland Islands were ceded to Russia. Finland, it is important to note, maintained her free constitution and her fundamental laws. The two languages, Swedish and Finnish, were spoken but neither had an exclusive official status.



When the Russians came into power they tried to force the Russian language upon Finland. This was strongly resisted by both Finns and Swedes.

That, and other autocratic steps taken by the Russians, led to the famous "national strike" in November, 1905. The strike was almost one hundred percent effective throughout Finland and at all levels of occupation. In an Imperial Manifesto of November 7, 1905, the demands of Finland were accepted and the "Status quo ante" was restored.

All this united the Swedes and the Finns. The old constitution, introduced by the Swedes, became effective again and on the basis of that constitution needed reforms have, from time to time, been made. The results are twofold.

## Chapter II - Finland, a Scandinavian Country.

Because of the lengthy Swedish occupation, over parts of Finland from 1153 and over all of Finland from 1323 to 1809, and through the joint resistance to Russian aggression, the Scandinavian way of life has been adopted by the Finns and become the Finnish way of life. The thoughts in the minds of many people that because the Finns are of Finno-Ugrian descent they are really not Scandinavians has to be modified. The least that can be said is that they have become Scandinavian by choice. They call themselves Nordics, and limit the word "Scandinavian" to the Swedes and Norwegians.





In an official letter-folder, over the signature of the Finnish Ambassador, His Excellency, Arturi Lehtinen,<sup>(1)</sup> appears the following:

"Finland is part of the Nordic or Scandinavian community of nations, together with Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Iceland. These nations have much in common, apart from living in the same region of the world. For many centuries, before becoming fully independent, Finland was part of Sweden, and during that time our religious, political, legal, and social life, was shaped on the same lines as in Sweden."

### Chapter III - Two Official Languages in Finland.

Although only about ten percent of the population of Finland is of Swedish descent both Finnish and Swedish are official languages of Finland. Furthermore the co-operation of the two elements from the point of view of language is excellent, better than in any other country in the world.

During the centuries when Sweden ruled Finland, Swedish was the court language but no deliberate effort was made to compel the Finns to change their language. On the other hand, during the Russian occupation, Russian was declared the official language and a determined effort was made to force Russian upon the people.

Mr. Lasse Majamaa, who migrated to Canada in 1952, delivered a lecture in Winnipeg in 1964, in which he said in part:

"At the turn of the century a period of Czarist oppression began and Finland's autonomy was threatened. The reaction to this was passive resistance and an increased desire for independence. Advantage was taken of the Russian revolution in 1917, and on December 1, 1917, Finland declared herself an independent republic. But the complete establishment of the country's independence was only assured after a hard fight



against extreme leftist elements in Finland allied with Russian soldiers still remaining in the country. Peace with Russia was signed in 1920.

"One of the first steps taken by the new government was to declare both Finnish and Swedish official languages of Finland."

#### Chapter IV - Bilingualism Has Worked Out Very Well in Finland. (2)

Both Finnish and Swedish are taught in the public schools of Finland everywhere, with the result that every student who has passed the high school level is bilingual. Of course, all at the university level are bilingual. All civil servants, except at the bottom levels, have to be bilingual; so also, clerks in the larger stores and all personnel in the better positions in commercial and industrial enterprises.

The use of either Finnish or Swedish as languages of instruction in the public schools is almost unique and very instructive to Canadians at the present time. The selection of either language as the language of instruction depends upon the population content, or rather upon the language used in the home. Many of Swedish origin may speak Finnish rather than Swedish and vice versa.

In areas where the use of the two languages is about equally divided there might be two schools close together, both maintained by the State. In one of the schools Finnish would be the language of instruction and in the other Swedish. In the Swedish areas, close to Sweden, and on the Åland Island, Swedish is mostly the language of



instruction but not exclusively. Mr. Majamaa reports that in some of such schools, Swedish might be the language of instruction in nine out of the ten grades; in others the percentage would vary. On the other hand the reverse would apply in the much larger part of Finland where Finnish predominates.

It is therefore obvious that the background of the Finnish population of Canada is of special significance in any assessment of the Finnish contribution to the Canadian way of life.

Another factor might be added. After World War I, a class struggle developed, landowners and the upper classes in the cities against the peasants and the working classes. In some respects this was a continuation of what had happened before Finland obtained its independence in 1917. The upper classes won and many of the lower classes migrated to Canada and the United States. Most of these immigrants had strong leftist views.

#### Chapter V - Finnish Settlement in Canada.

The first Finnish immigrants to Canada, in the 1870's, settled in the Port Arthur area, at that time called Prince Arthur Landing. They did not come direct from Finland but from Duluth, Wisconsin, U.S.A. They were mostly men who went north to work on the Canadian Pacific Railway which was being pushed through at that time. When the railroad was completed these men and their families settled in the area. Subsequently, there was substantial immigration into the district. The population in the





area surrounding Port Arthur is even now almost solidly Finnish. There is a Finnish paper in Port Arthur, Canada News, and various Finnish social and cultural organizations.

The two other main settlements are in Toronto and Sudbury. In Toronto there is a tri-weekly paper, Vapaa Sana (Free Press). The editor, Mr. Bruno Tenhunen, is the immediate past president of the Canada Ethnic Press Federation. Other Finnish communities are in Timmins, Sault Ste Marie, Montreal and Vancouver. The estimated Finnish-Canadian population is 70,000 to 80,000.

A general opinion prevails that many Finnish Canadians are Communists. The outlook of the immigrant from Finland depends upon when he left Finland. Most of those who left during the struggle for supremacy in Finland in the 1920's were Communists and continued to be so in Canada. However, they were not Marxists. They were and are left wing Socialists. On the other hand, some immigrants from Finland who arrived in Canada after World War II are extreme rightists, representative of the remnants of the old aristocracy in Finland.

## Chapter VI - Conclusion

The Finns of Canada, by and large, have a middle-of-the-road, a Scandinavian attitude. Because of their background they do not find it difficult to understand Canadian bilingualism, but they do not agree that Canada should be bicultural. Freedom lies deep in the Finnish heart; for centuries they fought for it and they strongly feel that, through that



struggle and the struggle against the elements in a northern climate, they have built up a precious heritage and a tradition which should not be hastily set aside. They will prove reasonably flexible - through a training acquired in the old home land - as long as certain fundamentals are not lost or forgotten.



## PART FOUR

### THE NORWÉGIAN CONTRIBUTION

#### Chapter 1 - The Settlements

According to the well-known historian, Martin Ulvestad, Norwegian settlers arrived in Canada as early as 1857, when the sea captain, Johan Svensen from Risør, founded a settlement at Bury in the Province of Quebec. The descendants still live in that district. A few Norwegians arrived in Canada in 1812 with Lord Selkirk and settled in or near Winnipeg. An odd Norwegian entered the service of the Hudson's Bay Company and traded with the Indians in the far north.

The first attempt at a larger Norwegian colonization was made in 1860. The Province of Quebec started this migration by obtaining the services of a well-known Norwegian, Cristoffer Kloster. At that time he was manager of a sawmill in the province and it was decided that the colony should be located on the Gaspé Peninsula about 350 miles east of the City of Quebec. The district selected was poor land, stony and lacking fertile top soil, but it was thought that the Norwegians, used to the sea, could live on fishing, supplemented by what could be grown on the uninviting land.

The settlers needed boats and expensive nets for fishing, and agricultural implements for breaking and cultivating the soil. A comparatively large sum was collected among the settlers and Kloster was sent to Quebec





to purchase for the colony. Unfortunately, he went away for a number of months and the settlers were left to fend for themselves. The supply of food was limited and some of the settlers tried to obtain employment among other fishermen in the neighborhood but the wages offered were very low.

A bare existence was eked out the first year and the settlers found that Gaspe was too rugged and uninviting. The first winter was cruel and there was much suffering. The colony broke up and even the Quebec Government helped some of the settlers to travel to friends and relatives in the far west. If Kloster had not gone away and there had been someone there to organize the area the settlement might have succeeded. (1)

The first settlement in Ontario started in the 1870's around Gravenhurst and what was then Sequin Falls, later Jarlsberg. A Lutheran parish was established in Jarlsberg in 1876.

A migration to British Columbia started shortly after gold was discovered in that province in the 1860's. One of the leaders was Hans Helgeson. He took a very prominent part in the political life of the province and was elected to the legislature - the first Scandinavian to be elected to a provincial legislature. (2)

John Brue and others arrived in British Columbia from the United States in 1884, and organized a small settlement in the neighborhood of New Westminster. In 1894, under the leadership of Pastor Christian Saugestad, a settlement was opened in the beautiful Bella Coola district,



between Vancouver and Prince Rupert. The land was covered with heavy forest, and a settlement five hundred miles from the nearest railroad proved to be difficult, but yet was challenging, and eventually became rewarding. For many years the settlement had a distinctly Norwegian (or Scandinavian) atmosphere. The loom and the spinning wheel and other Norwegian customs and traditions prevailed. Bella Coola is now a flourishing settlement and has produced many prominent citizens of Norwegian descent. (3)

In Vancouver and surroundings there are thousands of Scandinavians: Norwegians, Swedes, Icelanders and some Danes and Finns.

A Norwegian settlement near Calgary started in the early 1880's and in 1894 the "New Norway" settlement was opened. The following year Pastor Bersvend Anderson founded the Bardu district, which was named after Bardu, in the County of Troms in Norway.

Camrose, with a population of about 10,000 is the centre of the largest Norwegian settlement in Alberta. It is also the cultural centre. In Camrose there is a flourishing Lutheran College which is referred to later.

The largest Norwegian settlement in Saskatchewan is the Outlook District. The immigrants to that district were an excellent type of rural-minded people and the area has, equally with Camrose, maintained a Norwegian atmosphere.



In 1887, the first Manitoba settlement was opened in Brown, not far from Morden, by Norwegians who came from North Dakota. Later, Norwegian settlements opened closer to Winnipeg, the largest ones centering on Starbuck and Dacotah, south-west of Winnipeg.

After the turn of the century and up to the outbreak of World War 1 there was a fairly heavy migration of Norwegians from the United States. Many of them were farmers, or farmers' sons, who settled on homesteads still available in Western Canada. From the end of the First war to 1930, there was a steady flow of immigrants directly from Norway to Canada.

It is estimated that at the present time there are about 100,000 Norwegians or Canadians of Norwegian descent in Canada.

#### Chapter 11 - The Norwegian Immigrant

Norwegian immigrants, true to their origin, always sought independent occupations, that is, self-employment. A majority selected farming, while others, particularly on the west coast, turned to fishing. Trapping was attractive and many were lured to the far north and the Peace River district, even before that district was opened to agriculture. Norwegian labourers selected lumber camps rather than common labour in the cities. Those who chose to stay in the cities entered into small business enterprises and contracting.

From the very beginnings of migration to Canada the





Norwegians have endeavored to maintain their inheritance of culture and of language. The Norwegians are almost exclusively Lutherans and parishes were organized early and churches built. Thus the effort to maintain their heritage of language and culture is more or less a part of their Lutheran Church organizations.

Nevertheless, and aside from the churches, Norwegian social organizations were established both to maintain district cultural activities and to maintain liaison between the districts. By far the most important of these organizations was the League of Norsemen with lodges in the various provinces. The three men who provided the driving force were Pastor W. O. Walby and Consul Carl T. Kummen, both of Winnipeg, and the late Consul, Harald B. Westergaard, in Saskatchewan.

The League of Norsemen is unique in that it is really a branch of a World League of Norsemen (Nordmanns Forbundet), with headquarters in Oslo. This is an active organization for Norwegians all over the world. It publishes a bi-monthly review, which, it is interesting to note, is published in two editions, one in Norwegian and one in English. (4)

There is a western Norwegian organization, with headquarters in Minneapolis, called The Sons of Norway. It is primarily a sick and benefit society somewhat similar to the Independent Order of Foresters. At one time The Sons of Norway had an excellent band which travelled



to Winnipeg and elsewhere.

The Sons of Norway movement in Winnipeg was started by Peter Myrvold and in Camrose, Alberta, by J<sup>''</sup>orgen Bjornsted.

Neither the League of Norsemen nor the Sons of Norway are very active in Canada at the present time. That may be partly because there are Scandinavian clubs and similar organizations in Canada which draw their strength from all the Scandinavian groups. There are clubs, owned and operated by Scandinavians in both Vancouver and Edmonton. The Viking Club of Winnipeg has been in existence for many years. Three years ago it took the lead in organizing The Scandinavian Centre which owns the building in which it operates.

The Norwegians have not been as prone to publishing papers and magazines as the Swedes and the Icelanders. Nor<sup>''</sup>røna began publishing in 1910, the publisher being P. N. Dahl, operating under the name Dahl Company, Limited. The two chief editors were Peter Myrvold and Magnus Talgoy, both deceased. In Vancouver, the Vancouver Posten was published for some years but it has ceased publication. Dahl Company, Limited, is now under the management of Helge V. Pearson, who publishes both Nor<sup>''</sup>røna and Canada Tidningen.

### Chapter 111 - Norwegian Lutheran Colleges

The Norwegian Lutheran Colleges have been left to the last and purposely so. Although the one weekly newspaper and the organizations, which appear to be losing in vitality, will continue to play their part in the



retention of the Norwegian language and Norwegian traditions, undoubtedly the main burden will fall upon the Lutheran colleges. The language is becoming less and less the language of the home and it is felt that only by maintaining a strong Norwegian atmosphere in the colleges can Norwegian culture and language endure.

There are three Lutheran Colleges in Western Canada, in Regina and Outlook, in Saskatchewan, and in Camrose, Alberta. Details in regard to only one need be given and the College in Outlook is selected.

In 1911 the Norwegian Lutherans of Saskatchewan organized the Norwegian Lutheran College Association and selected Outlook, in the heart of a large flourishing Norwegian settlement, as the site for the school. The opening of the school was on January 16, 1916, and there was a student body of 28 for the first year. The courses offered at the beginning were

College Preparatory

Normal

Parochial

Music

Commerce

The first school principal was Rev. H. V. Gronlid. The name of the school is The Lutheran Collegiate Bible Institute. It is a combination of a Lutheran College and a high school.

At first some public school grades were taught but after a few years, instruction, aside from the Bible Department, was





limited to high school subjects preparatory to entrance to the University of Saskatchewan.

The purpose and aim of the College is stated as follows:

"The College stands for Christian education." As its name implies, it is a school primarily for the Norwegian Lutherans in Saskatchewan. (5)

The following are statistics for the last two years.

	Bible Students	High School	Percentage Lutheran
1963-4	15	138	74
1964-5	18	156	77

The President of the College is Rev. Jacob B. Stolee, and the Principal of the High School is Mr. Ernst J. Anderson.

A few notes on the other two colleges are sufficient. The Camrose Lutheran College was founded in 1910. The President of the College is Professor G. Loken, B. A., M. Ed. It is a junior College of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada, directly affiliated with the University of Alberta. In 1964, University buildings were erected - a Dormitory and a Convocation Centre. The University program at the College for the year 1965-6 provides for first year studies leading to degrees in twelve University departments.

The following statistics disclose the present trend:

	Percentage Lutherans	High School	Full-time University	Total Enrolment
1963-4	50	158	43	201
1964-5	50	201	78	279

The pattern in the Regina Lutheran College is about the



same except that it is primarily a German Lutheran College.

There is one very revealing fact in regard to the two Norwegian colleges at Outlook and Camrose. At the opening of these colleges a fair percentage of the students sought to study Norwegian and a qualified teacher was engaged. The number selecting Norwegian kept decreasing every year and for some time back, because of lack of students, Norwegian has not been taught at either of these two colleges. Qualified teachers are still retained, if the need should arise.

On the other hand Norwegian is an option in the Arts Course in both the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Alberta. The hope is that students from the Norwegian Lutheran Colleges, on going to the universities, will select Norwegian as an option and that, on graduation, they will become the standard bearers of Norwegian culture, including the language.



## PART FIVE

### THE SWEDISH CONTRIBUTION

#### Chapter 1 - Beginnings of Swedish Immigration

The cause of Swedish emigration to Canada is the same as in the case of the other Scandinavian countries. The primary cause was economic but behind it was that old Norse spirit of seeking new adventures and reaching out to new lands. The early straggler migration is evidence of this.

When and under what conditions the first Swedes settled in Canada is not known. Certain circumstances seem, however, to indicate that an odd colonist from Sweden found his way to Canada after the first Swedish flag was raised on the shores of Delaware, U. S. A., more than three hundred and thirty years ago. The first definite evidence of Swedish settlers in Canada comes from the Red River Valley in Manitoba. Three Swedish names are among the Lord Selkirk group of settlers, Michael Heden, Lieutenant Holte and Jacob Fahlstrom. How they came to be members of this group is not known, but they may have taken part in the war against Napoleon, since Sweden at that time was an ally of Great Britain, and eventually found their way to Scotland, thence to Manitoba.

Lieutenant Holte, a former officer in the Swedish navy, arrived in the Red River Valley on November 3, 1815, according to





F.H. Schofield's History of Manitoba. He was not only aide-de-camp to Governor Robert Semple, but also commandant of the Hudson's Bay navy on Lake Winnipeg, consisting of one ship with a gun.

Both Lieutenant Holte and Michael Heden, the village blacksmith, took part in the Seven Oaks Battle on June 19, 1816.

When Governor Semple and his group were attacked by Metis and Indians in the service of the North-West Company at Fort Douglas, Lieutenant Holte, in his endeavour to protect the Governor, was the first one to be killed.

Michael Heden, who arrived with Lord Selkirk's first expedition in 1812, was also present at the Battle of Seven Oaks but managed to escape. Nothing further is heard of him, but it is quite possible that he joined other colonists who fled south to present Minnesota after the massacre at Seven Oaks.

#### Chapter 11 - Swedish Pioneers in Manitoba

In 1860 a Swede by the name of Carl Anderson was in the employ of the Hudson's Bay Company. Later he moved to Morden, Manitoba.

In 1874, a young Swede by the name of M.P. Peterson arrived in Fort Garry by boat from St. Paul, Minnesota. It was the year Fort Garry received its franchise as a city and was named Winnipeg. Peterson took a very prominent part in all Swedish activities until his death in his early thirties.



During the following decades, 1880-1900, the flow of immigrants from Sweden grew steadily. A large percentage of them obtained employment with the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, at that time completing the railway from Montreal to Vancouver. These immigrants were mostly unskilled laborers and the Railway Company offered fairly good wages. Many of them also worked on the Great Northern Railroad in the construction of a railway link with Winnipeg, and the western branches. "Give me Swedes and snuff," said the President of the Great Northern, Jim Hill, at the time, "and I'll build a railroad to hell!" While this saying may be legendary, it proves the popularity of the Swedish workers at the time.

It is estimated that from 1921 to 1929, when the great depression hit Canada, no less than one thousand immigrants per year arrived from Sweden. During the following decades the emigration from Sweden was reduced to a mere trickle, and many earlier immigrants chose to return to their homeland rather than face unemployment.

Only a small percentage of Swedish immigrants settled in the eastern provinces, mostly in Toronto and Montreal. By far the largest number found their way to the western prairies and British Columbia. Many of the immigrants were farmers or farmers' sons, and the lure of free homesteads was the magnet that attracted them.

In the early days, Manitoba had good connections with the United States via the Red River. Therefore, a large number of Swedish settlers found their way up to Winnipeg via steamships plying the muddy



waters of the Red River. Many settled in Winnipeg, while some continued west or north. Actually, about forty percent of the Swedes in Manitoba are living in Winnipeg. Today Canada has a total of approximately 250,000 Scandinavians of whom approximately 100,000 are of Swedish origin.

### Chapter III - Cultural Activities

The most important impulse behind united activities was obviously the fact that the recent arrivals from Sweden felt somewhat lost in the new land and unable to cope with language and strange customs. To begin with they usually met in each other's homes in order to enjoy the companionship of one another, but by the middle of the 1880's there was a sufficient number of Swedes in Winnipeg to begin thinking of founding Swedish organizations of various kinds. It is worthy of note that the first signal calling for some kind of Swedish union came from the press. In 1886, the great Swedish pioneer in Western Canada, the founder of the Stockholm colony in Saskatchewan, Emmanuel Öhlen, founded the first Swedish paper, Den Skandinaviske Canadiensaren (The Scandinavian Canadian). Although this publication was published only once a month and was mainly supported by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company as a promotional medium, it was still a Swedish paper badly needed by the scattered Swedish settlers.

How many Swedish organizations have been formed in Winnipeg since the 1880's is almost impossible to state with accuracy.





All the country-wide church organizations, as well as others, were first started in Winnipeg, the Swedish cultural centre. On January 30, 1885, the first Christian organization, God's Scandinavian Church, was formed in Winnipeg. It was organized by M.P. Peterson and Emmanuel Öhlen (referred to above), and is now called the Mission Covenant Church. Only a few years later, the Lutheran and the Baptist churches were formed. From these local churches the Canada Conference of the Augustana Synod and the Scandinavian Baptist Church developed.

In the beginning of the 1890's two Temperance Societies were formed. One of them lasted only ten years but the other, the lodge Framtidens Hopp (Hope of the Future), lasted well into the 1930's and gave a start to the Scandinavian Grand Lodge of the International Order of Good Templars in Canada, with a score of lodges in various parts of the country.

In 1901, a Sick and Benefit Society, Norden, was formed, one of the oldest Scandinavian organizations in Canada with a present membership in Winnipeg of about one hundred men. The Norden Society, while primarily organized for the purpose of assisting its members in case of sickness, has financially supported many worthwhile endeavours among the Swedes in Winnipeg, and for a number of years had its own band which performed on festive occasions. Next among the still existing Swedish societies is the Swedish Male Voice Choir, formed in 1911. It is still in existence and offers annual concerts, featuring Swedish, Icelandic, Norwegian and English songs. The membership consists of



Swedish and Icelandic singers. The Choir is affiliated with the American Union of Swedish Singers, and takes part in the semi-annual singing festivals arranged by the Union. On three occasions the Swedish Male Voice Choir has been host to such singing festivals held in Winnipeg. The Choir, together with its Ladies' Auxiliary, has on many occasions given financial support to other cultural attempts in Winnipeg.

In the long line of Swedish organizations on this continent, the Vasa Order of America is, undoubtedly, the most important. It has local lodges in many centres and district lodges in all western provinces from Ontario to British Columbia. The first lodge of the Vasa Order in Canada was the lodge Strindberg, formed in Winnipeg. Later, other lodges came into existence and on August 1, 1914, these lodges organized into a district lodge, comprising lodges subsequently formed in Ontario, Saskatchewan and Alberta. After some years, due to the distance of travel, a separate district lodge was formed in Alberta.

The Order of Vasa has done much to promote cultural interest among the Swedish people. It has a Scholarship Fund in support of promising students. It arranges annual excursions to Sweden for young and old, and has its own monthly publication.

#### Chapter IV - Publications

It was obvious that the wide-awake Swedish settlers in Winnipeg would soon feel the need of a newspaper in which they could



express their thoughts and which would serve as a uniting link with other Swedish Communities that had sprung up in various parts of the West. The Scandinavian Canadian (already referred to) was followed by the Sions Vaktare (Sentinels of Zion), in 1892, which was later re-named the Svenska Canada Tidningen (Swedish Canada News). It is now published every second Thursday under the name Canada Tidningen. In 1904, the Canada Posten was established by the Swedish Mission Covenant Church, but it has ceased publication.

Among the periodicals published in Winnipeg mention must be made of the monthly magazine Forum, a half-radical publication, which gave birth to several Forum Clubs in the Swedish colonies. Another periodical was the Idog, published by the Swedish Good Templar Lodge in Winnipeg. During the "Hungry Thirties" the unemployed Swedes in Winnipeg founded the Frihet (Liberty), a radical monthly which was devoted to the cause of the unemployed, pleading socialistic views and social reforms. All these publications were excellent from a journalistic point of view and attracted some of the best writers of that day among the Swedes on this continent.

Because of the intense activity displayed by the Swedes in Winnipeg it was quite natural that this city came to be known as the Swedish centre of Canada. All the inspiring impulses in these early years emanated from Winnipeg and Logan Avenue came to be known as the Swedish Street Par Excellence. There were no less than four Swedish churches within the same block. Here the Swedish businessmen had





established themselves, such as retail stores, restaurants, hotels, etc., and here the early immigrants met to learn something of their adopted land and to discuss points of mutual interest. There was a time when the daily language of Logan Avenue, to a large extent, was Swedish.

Today the picture has changed. The churches have been sold to other denominations; the restaurants are gone; no Swedish stores are left. Only the Swedish newspaper is still published there.

#### Chapter V - Swedish Settlements in Western Canada

In the early days Winnipeg received a majority of Swedish immigrants, but very few actually stayed in that city. After a short time they continued their journey in search of land, offered free to the new settlers. As most of them had little or no money, they usually sought employment in the bush or with the railroads during the winter. After having built a primitive home for the family on the chosen homestead, the father went to work when the cold weather set in, to return to the homestead in the spring with whatever money he had managed to save. After a few years he was usually able to devote all his time to his farm.

Stockholm, formerly in the North-West Territories, now in Saskatchewan, was one of the first Swedish settlements in the West. The first immigrants arrived there shortly after the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway. In a few years time the community began to prosper. Schools and churches were built and with increased prosperity



the desire arose for other cultural activities. In Stockholm, and the adjoining town of Dubuc, which also had a large number of Swedish settlers, lodges of the Order of Vasa and the Independent Order of Good Templars sprung up. For many years this district took a leading part in promoting Swedish culture. Here, on the shores of beautiful Round Lake, the Swedish Canadian League, with local lodges in many Swedish centres, was organized in the late Twenties. Here also, for a number of years, the Swedes from central Canada used to gather for their "tings" at midsummer time. With the passing of the first generation, these gatherings have ceased.

In Manitoba early Swedish settlements were formed at Teulon, Eriksdale, Mulvihill, Scandinavia, Erickson and Hilltop. It is noteworthy that the pattern was the same, and during the first three decades of this century these settlers took a very active part in community life and in the preservation of their Swedish cultural heritage.

Rat Portage, now Kenora, in Western Ontario, saw many Swedish settlers and was, next to Winnipeg, the most active Swedish colony in central Canada. In the eighties and nineties the Swedes established a reputation for being the best workers in the district. Many of their sons are now leading business men in Kenora. In Port Arthur and Fort William there is a large number of Swedes, equally good settlers and their descendants equally eager to make their voices heard in varied activities. The same can be said of a much smaller settlement in Fort Frances, Ontario.



In Saskatchewan there are a number of smaller Swedish settlements, such as Wadena, Hendon, Beaty, Melfort, Canwood, Prince Arthur.

Outside of Stockholm, Saskatchewan, there are a number of communities in Western Canada with unmistakable Swedish names, indicating that the first settlers in all likelihood were Swedish, such as Ostersund, Lac Lu, and Upsala, in Ontario; Hallonquist in Saskatchewan; and Calmar, Malmo, Westeros and New Sweden, in Alberta.

Since many of the Swedish immigrants were experienced bush workers and miners, it is obvious that they would find their way to British Columbia after the railroad was finished in 1885. In the early nineties the town of Revelstoke had a large number of Swedish-born residents. Other Swedish communities were Matsqui, Silverhill, Malakwa, Golden, Campbell River and Smithers, not to mention towns with names distinctly Swedish, such as Lund, Erickson and Vasa. Many Swedes also settled in Prince Rupert, Prince George, Trail, Nelson, Kimberly, Port Alberni and Cranbrook.

#### Chapter VI - Changes in Population following World War 11

With the outbreak of the Second World War great changes in the population figures took place. Many of the pioneers, living on the prairies, had reached the retirement age, and were yearning for the milder climate of the Pacific coast. Others, and mostly the younger people, moved to Vancouver, where the war industry needed both men and women, and where





wages were comparatively higher than in the prairie provinces. Hence, within a few years time, Winnipeg was dethroned as the "Capital of the Swedes" and Vancouver took the lead.

Years of great cultural activities followed. The Lutheran, Baptist and Mission Covenant churches were already established in Vancouver and elsewhere in the Province. So was the Order of Vasa. The Swedes also had their own Swedish newspaper, the Swedish Press, at present edited by Matthew M. Lindfors, in Vancouver. The influx of thousands of Swedes from the prairies, already interested in and acquainted with Swedish organizations, brought about a revival of enthusiasm and Swedish cultural life began to flourish anew. The churches and other Swedish organizations were strengthened through new blood, and a new club was formed; the Bellman Male Voice Chorus was organized; and in 1949 a home for Senior Swedish Citizens was built. It is interesting to note that a similar Senior Citizens Home is being built in the oldest Swedish settlement, Winnipeg, on the property of Vasalund in Charleswood.

A considerable number of Swedes are living in New Westminster, B. C., where they have their own churches as well as a local lodge of the Order of Vasa. Victoria is another west coast city which lately, because of its pleasant climate, has attracted many elderly Swedes, who have moved there to spend their declining years away from the bitter prairie winters.

#### Chapter VII - Conclusion

Canadians of Swedish descent have not forgotten the glorious



past of their old homeland and the course now taken there (already dealt with in the Introduction), nor have they forgotten the toil of the pioneers and the cultural wealth they passed on. They feel that the rich past enables them to make their full contribution to the building of this, one of the senior "middle" nations of the world.



## PART SIX

### THE DANISH CONTRIBUTION

#### Chapter I - Introduction: Danish Attempt to find the Northwest Passage

Around 1600 several European powers sent expeditions north of America to find another route to India and China. King Christian IV, having heard of Henry Hudson and William Baffin, was anxious to find a Northwest passage. In 1619 he sent Captain Jens Munk, with two ships, for this purpose. In 1610 Captain Munk had been on an expedition to Novaja Semlja and was well-acquainted with Arctic conditions. He was late in getting started. Due to bad winds, leakages and sickness on board, he did not reach Greenland until about the 1st of July. Captain Munk sailed into Frobisher Bay, which he named Ice Bay. Then he went south of Resolution Island into Hudson's Bay and finally arrived at the mouth of a river - the present Churchill River - which he named Munk's Bay. That was on September 7th and after a ship's council he decided to stay there over the winter. He raised the standard of his King there and called the place "Nova Dania."

The crew of sixty-six were ill-equipped to withstand Arctic conditions. They did not have warm clothes, suffered from scurvy and other diseases, and died one by one. On Christmas Day, the chaplain, Rasmus Jensen, held a Christmas service, the first Protestant service on the American continent. He died a few days later. By February 25th





twenty-two men had died, and on April 10th the number was forty-one dead, and by June, 1620, only four men were alive. Captain Munk decided to return to Denmark. In the meantime another man died, and on July 16th he sailed, with a crew of two, in the small ship "Lamprenen" and arrived at the Norwegian coast on September 21st, and thanked God for a safe voyage. All this is preserved in Munk's Diary in the Royal Library in Copenhagen.

## Chapter II - First Danish Settlement: New Denmark, 1872

After the unhappy war between Denmark and Germany in 1864 when Bismarck seized Slesvig-Holstein from Denmark, many Danes from the northern Province of Slesvig did not want to live under German rule and emigrated to America and other countries. One such man was Jacob Jensen, who took a party of his countrymen to New Brunswick. They landed at St. John on June 19, 1872, and with their few belongings worked their way up the St. John's River, then up the steep hills through heavily wooded terrain to the land given to them.

Then began a hard and tiresome life, clearing the forest of heavy timber. It was maple hardwood several feet across, and as there were no sawmills in the area the heavy trunks had to be buried in the ground, and the branches burned in piles. Stones had to be picked up, mostly by the women who, many years later, gave silent proof of their struggle by the crooked fingers of their work-worn hands. In 1940,



sixty-eight years later, a stone was raised in New Denmark commemorating the arrival of the founders of the settlement.

Jacob Jensen's son, Anders, was thirteen years old when the settlers arrived and he helped with the work. In the winters, he and many others had to go to the neighboring State of Maine for work, mostly in tanneries. Later on he told of how he studied English while turning a handle. Anders Jensen was the first farmer to have all his land cleared. Later he opened a store, where customers sat around the pot-bellied stove discussing what next to do. He was postmaster, Justice of the Peace, Councillor in the district - the "uncrowned king." He helped the many newcomers that arrived year by year. He honored the Danish language, was president of the Danish Lutheran Church. At his funeral in 1943, it was said that his memory would last for many years to come. He married twice and his many descendents are scattered all over Canada.

Until the land was cleared the settlers had a hard time. They started with cattle and dairying, but there were no markets, and the cities and towns were far away. Later on, they discovered the soil was best suited for potato growing. Prices were as low as ten cents a bushel, but they have been known to rise as high as Ten Dollars, and New Denmark potatoes are famous in far distant places. The landscape has a special attraction for Danes as it reminds them of the hills and dales of the old country. Although the oldtimers were very rugged individualists their descendents now have co-operatives, credit unions and other societies



for mutual betterment. They have their own community halls, churches and Women's Institutes.

Other settlements are now at Salmonhurst, Sussex, and Lawrence in New Brunswick, and many Danes live in St. John. Many are at Halifax, Wallace, Pugwash, and Kentville in Nova Scotia.

In Sussex, N. B. , Kjeld Deichman and his wife, Erica, found a special type of clay; they started a pottery industry and expanded it until the artistic products became known far and wide.

### Chapter III - Other Danish Settlements in Canada

The biggest Danish settlements in the West are located in southwestern Alberta. Wherever Danish farmers settle down, they build first of all a church, served by the Lutheran minister, either from the Danish mother church in the States or from Denmark. Next, they build a community hall, if warranted, and they take part in all activities like co-operatives, wheat pools, and politics.

In 1910 Jens Rasmussen, from Elk Horn, Iowa, founded the colony called Standard, sixty miles southeast of Calgary. Attracted by cheap land, many Danish farmers came from the northern United States. Later the Canadian Pacific Railway helped them with an irrigation system in the surrounding districts, so that good crops could be harvested in dry years. The town called Standard is predominantly Danish and serves the surrounding territories in an efficient manner.

Other settlements are located in Ponoka, Tilley, Dickson,





Kevisville, Markerville, Wayne, all in Alberta.

The colony known as Dalum, had for many years as its minister the Rev. Peter Rasmussen. The first pioneers arrived in 1917, mostly from the United States, and he worked untiredly and dedicatedly for the betterment of the people. He founded a high school on the Danish pattern but during the depression in the "thirties" it had to be closed. He also instituted the Folk Summer Meetings, where four to five hundred people gathered for lectures, and Young People's Theatre where they put on Danish plays. This was a summer holiday for the hard-working farmers and was very much enjoyed.

In Saskatchewan, a Danish settlement was founded in 1905 at Redvers, and it was called Danevirke. Its most prominent man was Simon Hjortnes, a giant both in stature and accomplishments. He brought many of his friends from the United States, and also from Denmark, directly to the district, and helped them all as best he could. He died a few years ago. They built a Lutheran Church and its best-known minister was Immanuel Johansen, another great spiritual leader. He and his wife eventually left and went back to serve the church in Denmark.

In Ontario there is a Danish settlement near Port Arthur, located on a peninsula jutting out into Lake Superior. It was founded in 1935. It was very difficult terrain and took many years to clear. Nevertheless, the Danes did not surrender. They built a church and a community hall and helped each other build their homes.



Among the better known pioneers are Johannes Byskov, F. R. Fribert and Jacob Engberg.

In Manitoba, several settlement were started, such as Moosehorn, Inwood and Scandinavia, but the best known is Ostenfeld, named after its founder of the same name, Bishop Jens Ostenfeld, who came over to dedicate the church. Here the Reverend Niels Damskov worked for many years. He was instrumental in getting grants of land from the government and helped the settlers in many ways to accustom themselves to life in this country. He was also Immigration Chaplain in Winnipeg and was well-known in that capacity all over Canada.

Mention should be made of the settlers at Sperling, where there seldom is a crop failure. One farmer, Mogens Nielsen, has about two thousand acres under cultivation. Many Danish settlers moved in the dry years of the "thirties" to the Swan River Valley. A church was built, and when the frost did not destroy the crop, the harvest was very bountiful.

Apart from the settlements, there are Danes farming all over Canada and they are generally successful. Many of them are in the creamery business and successfully manage or own dairies, and have often won prizes for butter-making and cheese.

There are Danish immigrants in almost every city or big town in Canada. If they are in sufficient numbers they form some kind of a club or society. After the turn of the century many craftsmen, clerks



and office personnel came to Canada.

#### Chapter IV - Danish Organizations

In 1913, the Danish Brotherhood was started in Winnipeg as a sick-benefit society, and it gathered the Danes to the usual Christmas, harvest and other social events, with dances and banquets. It sponsored small plays; had picnics to the beaches on Lake Winnipeg and other places in the summertime. During the Second World War it formed a branch of the Danish Spitfire Fund for helping the allies in the war effort. Money was gathered for the Red Cross and the Danish Seamen's Homes in Halifax and St. John. Many such branches were formed across Canada and they collected thousands of dollars for these purposes. The Danish Brotherhood ceased its activities at the end of the war around 1946.

The Danish Canadian Club was founded in 1934, and this club has since called the Danes to festive parties. The Viking Club was formed in 1942 for closer co-operation with other Scandinavian groups in Winnipeg for cultural and social activities, and for the reception of prominent Scandinavians from abroad. The annual Viking Ball has gathered its members and guests at banquets and dances, always giving the toast to the "Immortal Viking Spirit."

Danish clubs are found in almost every city all over Canada, always for the same purposes - mutual aid and social life.





## Chapter V - Prominent Danes in Canada

As the Danes are very democratic, it is very hard to mention any one as being more prominent than another. It is an old Danish saying that a man who gives his best to his country, to his work, his family and his fellow citizens, is a success, and it is a very natural thing for which he should not be especially praised. However, there are people who have given much more than others, and therefore they deserve mention.

C. P. Marker, of Edmonton, Alberta, was Dairy Commissioner for thirty years in his province. He had been Danish Vice-Consul, was Professor in Dairying at the University of Alberta and Deputy Minister of Agriculture. He was awarded an honorary Doctor's degree from the University of Alberta. Markerville is named after him.

Alfred Erling Porsild, of Ottawa, was an outstanding botanist. He supervised the trek of reindeer across Canada from Alaska, and was at one time curator of the National Herbarium in Ottawa. He holds a Ph. D. and M. B. E. , is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, of the Arctic Institute of North America, and the Canadian Geographic Society.

Major Jan Eisenhardt, of Montreal, Quebec, served with the Seaforth Highlanders in the Second World War. He was at one time Director of Physical Education in British Columbia.

Erik M. Poulsen, Ph. D. , is the General Secretary of the International Fishery Commission for the North West Atlantic, at Halifax, N. S.

Viggo Kihl, of Toronto, Ontario, is Professor at the Royal Conservatory of Music.

Miss Vibeke Engelbert, of Toronto, Ontario, came to Canada



in 1928 and has been Assistant Researcher at the Ontario Agricultural College at Guelph, Professor of Histology at the University of Toronto. She received her Ph. D. from that University in 1941.

#### Chapter VI - Danish Newspapers

The earliest Danish newspaper in Canada was Danebrog, edited by Vice-Consul Meyer, in Ottawa. It was only a small sheet, catering to Danes and Norwegians around Ottawa, and it ceased publication sometime during the First World War.

Most Danish people in Canada have taken the Danish Pioneer which is published in Omaha, Nebraska, U. S. A. It does not bring much news from Canada. It is still in existence, in its 93rd year, and is now published in Chicago, Illinois. It is still subscribed to by many Danes in Canada for its well written articles and for the news it brings every fortnight from all over the United States and Denmark.

The first attempt to publish a paper in the West was made in 1918 by Hans A. Brodahl. It was a department of the Norwegian newspaper "Norrøna, in Winnipeg. He toured the West and sent in correspondence from various Danish settlements visited, and also wrote articles on Denmark during the war. However, there was not enough interest among the Danes and it has discontinued publication.

During the twenties, with new immigration, a couple of attempts were made in Winnipeg to establish a paper, but they failed due to lack of interest.



In 1931, Odin Kuntze, who had a farm in Kentville, Nova Scotia, started an extremely well-edited weekly, Danish Herald, which he printed and published on his farm, called Brooklyn Farm. The late Editor-in-Chief of the Winnipeg Free Press, John W. Dafoe, visited his farm around 1937 and was much impressed by the editor and his publication, and wrote articles about it. The Danish Herald had representatives all over Canada that sent him the news, and he wrote about Canadian affairs, as well as Danish, and the rest of the world. A film of his farm and the printing establishment was made just before his death in 1939. His stepson, Edmond Green, carried on, but when he joined the Air Force, two years later, the publication discontinued as there was no one to manage it.

The next Danish newspaper was published in Toronto by Gunnar Voight. It was called Scandinavian News and was printed in English, so that other Canadians could learn about conditions in Scandinavia during the war. It had local editors across Canada and H. A. Brodahl was the western editor. It was discontinued in 1947, as it had accomplished its purpose.

About this time another Danish newspaper started in Toronto. It was Modersmaalet, published by the Danish Canadian Press and is now in its tenth year. The editor is Erik Melander, who has made it a success.

The Lutheran church paper Kirken og Hjemmet (Church and Home)





should be mentioned in grateful memory. It began in 1930 and brought news from all the Lutheran churches in Canada. The various editors were generally ministers, but in the forties the editor was Christian Svendsen who, after his death, was succeeded by W. E. Grauenkjer who continued editing it until it was discontinued in the late fifties.

#### Chapter VII - Danes as Canadian Citizens

People from Denmark have come to this country in great numbers - up to the present time, between 85,000 and 90,000, according to the Dominion Bureau of Statistics. Since the last war most Danes settled in the towns and cities and work at many different occupations. Many know English before they arrive - learned in the old country. After five years most of them take out citizenship papers and accept all the responsibilities and also the privileges of Canadians. Although their loyalties are to Canada they keep a deep love of the mother country for what she gave them: ideals, a good education and training, concern for fellow-citizens, enterprise, and traditions extending deep into the past. Canada is their adopted country by their own free will, but Denmark is their mother country.

A note on Canadian Unity must be added. Danes are far from being clannish, actually they assimilate so quickly that it is difficult to keep Danish newspapers operating, and Danish clubs and societies functioning; nevertheless Danish organizations are doing a useful service to the immigrants by giving advice and helping in different ways. It is



very important to introduce them to the ways of Canadian life in the first difficult years. The relationship of the Danes with other Canadlans has always been of the best.

One of the aims of The Viking Club is to "help improve the good relationship with other national groups." In 1942 the Danes of Winnipeg joined with a score or more national groups in the work of the Canadian Unity Council in the "Salute to Britain" rally at the Winnipeg Auditorium. The Council continued useful service for some time but finally gave way to the Citizenship Council of Manitoba.

Finally, it should be stated that the Danish group have always taken a sympathetic attitude to French Canada in their struggle for due and constitutional recognition. They abhor extremism but they support reasonable claims based upon Canadian history and the part French-Canadians have played in the building of the Canada of today.



## PART SEVEN

### CONCLUSION

In the instructions received from the Co-Secretaries of the Commission, the two suggested topics, aside from the historical background, are "The Cultural Contributions" and the "Aspirations of the Group."

The cultural contribution must be divided - the long range and the immediate. The one is more remote as it arises with the ancestor nations or groups from which the present Scandinavian nations have descended. Even though remote in origin, it may prove to be the more permanent, and will clarify during the years and centuries as its substance becomes better known and its impact more clearly seen. The other is immediate, living, throbbing, clearest when the settlers arrived. As it diffuses through the years in the Canadian milieu, it may become less distinct, it may become an aspect of Canadian culture rather than something apart. The one is Old Norse, the classic language of Northern Europe, the other is the collective heritages of the five Scandinavian groups - brought across in themselves and in the records of cultural achievement they have accumulated through the ages. These two cultural contributions are discussed under two headings, "The Norse Language" and "The Scandinavian Mind in Action."

#### Chapter 1 - The Norse Language

Here the term "Norse" or "Old Norse" embraces all the Norse





dialects of the Viking Age - the period of 850 to 1050. It includes the language or dialect spoken by Rurik and Askold, who ventured south-east to present Ukraine, and by Rollo, who headed south-west, across the land named Normandy. It includes the language or dialects spoken by the Vikings who occupied parts of "The Western Islands," an ancient term including Britain, Ireland and the islands around and to the north of them. Included, also, is the language of King Canute and his Danes. In particular, it includes the language spoken by the Norsemen, who, with their retinues, settled in Iceland.

As Iceland was the only unoccupied territory these Northmen or Vikings overran, it was in Iceland that they did not "lose themselves" and become absorbed in the peoples they subdued. The language or dialect they spoke was preserved and it is sometimes called "Old Norse" and, at times, "Old Icelandic."

The preservation of the language became possible partly because Iceland is an island (in those days far distant in the North Atlantic); partly because the settlers occupied uninhabited territory; but mainly because the heads of the families belonged to the landed gentry of the areas whence they came, with cultural achievements and qualities of leadership at the highest levels in Northern Europe. All this combined to create an elite which not only preserved the language but shortly afterwards reduced to writing what had previously been largely handed down by word of mouth. In that language were recorded the two Eddas, the Heimskringla, in



essence a history of the Norwegian kings, and the Icelandic Sagas.

The result of this combination of fortuitous circumstances is that in one of the dialects, now commonly known as Old Norse or Old Icelandic, has been preserved the northern branch of the Nordic or Germanic family of the Indo-European group of ancient Western languages.

Within the last two centuries this Old Norse language has been polished and purified, and the vocabulary has been vastly increased with words based upon Norse, not Greek nor Latin roots. How skilfully the inflexional variations and the syntax of the old language have been retained with an added modern rhythm of expression, is best illustrated by merely quoting the eminent authority, Frederick Bodmer, who, in "The Loom of Language," has said that an Icelandic schoolboy can read the Sagas with equal ease as the English-speaking boy reads Shakespeare. To translate the Sagas or even the Eddas, is, in Iceland, unthinkable. Hence western civilization has a living, smoothly flowing Old Norse.

Here a digression, revealing another and important cultural value of this ancient yet modern language, has to be made. As so much of central England and parts of Ireland and Scotland were settled by the Norsemen, including the Danes, this Old Norse language is recognized as one of the four root elements of modern English. Mr. H. B. Scott Symons, <sup>(1)</sup> of the Royal Ontario Museum, has written about "Icelandic" but he might just as well have used the words "modernized or streamlined Old Norse." He said:



"It seems clear to me that a study of Icelandic - ironically enough - would teach Canadians much about the Englishness of English as a tongue. In a remarkable way Icelandic is indeed a Canadian Mother-culture, and in particular a root culture for English-speaking Canadians, quite aside from its value as an independent culture."

It can be said with considerable justification that this Old Norse language belongs to the Icelandic people who have preserved, improved and polished it, but the more strongly it is claimed that the language is really Old Norse the weaker does their claim to exclusive ownership become. Hence, though perhaps less directly, Icelandic belongs to all the Scandinavian peoples - a mother or a root culture to them all. One can go a step further. Old Norse is one of the ancestor languages to English, hence Icelandic belongs to the whole Nordic or Germanic family of nations in that it is the only extant and living language of that ancient group and hence a root culture to all the descendant Nordic languages.

The Scandinavians of Canada have an opportunity, little short of a duty, to make known this "Canadian mother and root culture." This knowledge and the diffusion of it will become a cultural enrichment to Canada and it will gather strength as the awareness of it widens. This also can be applied to French-speaking Canadians, a vast majority of whom trace their ancestry to Northern France, the land of Rollo and the Normans. This wider enlightenment will help raise this classical language of Northern Europe to a level, as a root culture, with Latin, Classic Greek and Ancient Hebrew.





## Chapter II - The Scandinavian Mind in Action

In summary it can be stated that the direct cultural contribution of the Scandinavians to the building of the Canadian nation rests primarily upon the Scandinavian way of life as revealed from time immemorial down through the ages.

In assessing their contribution to the development of Canadian citizenship, and in order to provide an explanation of why these people fit so readily into the Canadian pattern of nation building two facts in the history of these five Northern European nations must be kept clearly in mind. These facts centre upon struggle - at times fierce with heavy loss of life.

The struggle in two of the countries, Iceland and Finland, was different to that in the other three, but the reaction in all five, as a result of the struggles, was somewhat the same.

Norway, Denmark and Sweden, in turn, rose to military might with a resulting enlargement of territory over which they held domain. It is therefore essential to review briefly the ascendancy to power of these three nations and their decline. It is not a rise and fall as in the case of the Roman Empire and other dynasties of the past. It is rather the story of nations that rose beyond what their resources and manpower could sustain and who, in their seeming decline, changed their assessment of values and settled to the calm of the last few centuries, nurturing and cultivating their new outlook and sense of



human values.

The earliest rise to power was in present Norway under Harald Harfager, who reigned from 872 to 930, his strength deriving chiefly from the landed gentry or aristocracy of that time. When that aristocracy disappeared the power of Norway weakened.<sup>(2)</sup> In 1319 the Norwegian and Swedish thrones were united and in 1397 the thrones of Norway, Sweden and Denmark were united under King Erik. This could not endure and from 1450 Norway became firmly joined with Denmark, at times being reduced to the status of a province. In 1814 Norway entered into union with Sweden which was not broken until 1905.

Danish expansion began in the reign of Harald Bluetooth (940-986) and reached the zenith of its power under the Valdemars I and II (1157-1251). There was a decline, a period of disintegration but under Valdemar IV (1340-1375) Denmark was again established as a great Baltic power.<sup>(3)</sup> His very able daughter, Margaret (1375-1412), took the lead in 1397 in uniting the three kingdoms. The break-up started in 1448, when Sweden chose Karl Knutsson, who became Charles VIII, the first of a succession of powerful Swedish kings. Norway continued with Denmark, definitely the weaker of the two.

Since that time Denmark has been caught in alliances and in expansion movements of rising powers. There was the French-Swedish alliance, the rise in power of the Dutch and the ambitions of



Prussia. As a result, Denmark has been reduced to her present size and lack of power.

Sweden's glory may be said to have started with Charles VIII and ended with Charles XII.<sup>(4)</sup> In the reign of Charles IX Sweden became strongly Protestant and developed considerable military power. His son, Gustavus Adolphus, continued the military invasions of Poland and Russia. He plunged into the Thirty Years' War which, in the final result, proved a shattering loss to Sweden.

Sweden's great expansion took place during the reigns of Charles X and XI. "Sweden emerged from the war (with Russia) not only a military power of the first magnitude, but also one of the largest states of Europe, possessing about twice as much territory as modern Sweden."<sup>(5)</sup>

The disasters of the reign of Charles XII, in the war with Russia in 1741, and later the rule, in turn, of the "Hats" and the "Caps," need not be gone into here. The Baltic provinces were lost by the Treaty of Bystad, 1721.<sup>(6)</sup> The Sweden of military strength disappeared and a much smaller Sweden remains.

The permanent effect of the rise and fall in military power, which took place in Norway, Denmark and Sweden, has been a complete withdrawal from the type of national pride and ambition which such power creates. It would be unfair to say that this has been a needed chastening: it rather has caused a change of direction. New national





paths were sought and patterns created. As the spirit that produced war and aggression declined that of social justice developed.

A somewhat similar process has taken place in Finland and Iceland but through different causes. These two countries have indeed had their bitter struggles. Finland has had to fight for its very existence in defence of its territories against Swedish and Russian aggression. In Iceland the struggle has mainly been against the elements, against "frost og funa," frost and fire, and for some centuries Danish trade monopolies had a devastating economic effect.

All this has led to the emergence, in the five Scandinavian countries, of a feeling of brotherliness, socialism and co-operation. The sense of grandeur, where it existed, has given way to a sense of humanism.

The struggles of the past have brought about another change - a change of emphasis - with the result that literature, music and art have developed and expanded to an outstanding degree. Sweden has produced Selma Lagerlof; Norway, Bjornstjerne Bjarnson and Henrik Ibsen; Finland, Jean Sibelius and Norway, Edvard Grieg. Denmark produced the sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen, and Iceland, Einar Jonsson.

Love of freedom and a sense of individualism, so strong in the Odalsmen of ancient Norway, have been retained through the



centuries and today are strong threads in the warp and woof of the Scandinavian fabric. The modern protagonist of freedom is Jon Sigurdsson of Iceland, who, "with the pen," won independence for Iceland. The spirit of individualism, an undoubted asset, has its inherent weakness if carried to extremes. Examples of such extremes are Charles XII of Sweden and the heads of the Godords or regional divisions of ancient Iceland, which led to the unfortunate animosities during the Sturlunga age in Iceland. However, such extremes have always produced their own nemesis as all the Scandinavian peoples know full well.

In the Scandinavian people there is a remarkable combination of opposites - a destruction, yet a continuation. This propensity was well stated in a recent address of Joseph E. Martin, Executive Secretary of the Manitoba Centennial Corporation<sup>(7)</sup> when he said:

"Arnold Toynbee, one of the greatest living intellectuals, wrote in his monumental work, 'The Study of History,' that one of the outstanding virtues of the Icelandic and, indeed, of all the Scandinavians, resulted in their own destruction. That characteristic is their remarkable receptivity. Nearly one thousand year ago William of Apulia noted this characteristic in a rather bad hexameter which, roughly translated, goes something like this: 'They take over the customs and languages of those who join their standards and that results in a single race.' The best example of this, historically, is the conquest of England in 1066. Only a century and a half before this famous battle the Vikings had conquered Normandy, but in the intervening century and a half they became absorbed by the people they conquered and when they conquered England they did so as Frenchmen, rather than Vikings."



The experiences of the past, for which high prices have been paid, are major elements in the Scandinavian heritage brought to Canada. Their leavening effects are qualities much needed in the moulding of the Canadian pattern of citizenship.

Canada occupies now, and will continue to occupy, a leading position at the second level of nations in the world of today. She will never be a big power and her greatness lies in that secondary role and her ready and willing acceptance of it. A tradition of "Rule, Britannia, Britannia Rules the Waves," or a Napoleon Bonaparte image are handicaps rather than assets and do not fit into the pattern being moulded in Canada. Furthermore, Canada has not centuries-old slums or starvation conditions. There is poverty in places calling for remedies; the aboriginal Indians are entitled to better treatment; and there are other discriminations. The people of Canada, even in their varieties and diversities, are a middle-of-the-road people, in a country occupying a middle-of-the-road role on the world stage.

Settlers from the five Scandinavian countries, with their present outlook, fit admirably into this setting. Their fatherlands are equally middle-of-the-road nations. The Scandinavian countries, like Canada, occupy positions of trust and prestige far beyond what the population count or material resources may appear to warrant. It was no accident that the late Carl Hambro, who died last year, was the last President of the former League of Nations. Neither was it an accident





that Tryggve Lie and Dag Hammarskjold were the first two secretaries-general of the United Nations.

The heritage the Scandinavians bring with them will quickly diffuse but it will not disappear. The "Scandinavian Mind in Action" may in course of time not be as clearly seen as during the settlement period but in the inevitable diffusion it, as in the case of the Normans of old, will "modify and strengthen national usages and national life" in Canada. The humanism which characterizes these people will become a strand of striking hue and color in the Canadian fabric.

#### Chapter III - Aspirations of the Scandinavian Group

In an address delivered in Winnipeg, May 29, 1965, His Excellency, the Rt. Hon. Georges P. Vanier, Governor General of Canada said:

"I don't know why the Lord has been so good to us."

The gifts that the Lord has given to us are more than the limitless natural resources. Providence has guided to the shores of Canada peoples who have come from many lands to share those limitless resources - to share the much greater human wealth which is being moulded here.

Canada is the northern half of North America. Immediately to the south is the most powerful of the "big powers" of the free world, the United States of America. Strong ties of tradition, kith and kin bind her to the two western powers of Europe, the United Kingdom and France.



To the north, across the Arctic, is the U. S. S. R. , stretching from its satellite states across Siberia to the Behring Sea. In the Far East, or west from British Columbia, across the Pacific is Red China. Is it the Hand of Destiny that has thus placed Canada; that has filled Canada's depths and surface soils with limitless wealth for human need; that has beckoned people from far away shores to share each others' learning, trials and experience, and to clasp each others' hands? In the world of today it all is frightening but yet a glorious challenge. Is it mere accident or dare we say: "Some call it evolution, others call it God?"<sup>(8)</sup>

From the point of view of population growth Canada has no parallel in the world. Two founding peoples, the French and English; one largely concentrated in one province, all of the same faith, Catholic; the other scattered across Canada, of many faiths but predominantly Protestants. There has been intermittent immigration which commenced long before Confederation; in large numbers about the turn of the century and in even larger numbers since World War 11. The inevitable result is that there are vigorous groups of people, at times competing and clashing, at times co-operating with a common vision. At times there is laudable tolerance, at times it is lacking. The need of unity is frankly acknowledged by all, but at the same time diversity is freely accepted as a needed asset.

If, out of this heterogeneous mass of people, with its seeming impossibilities, placed in its frightening geographical position, there



emerges a united democracy, an example will be set for the world which, in its present state of international tension, it greatly needs.

It is the hope of Canadians of Scandinavian descent that the enriching experience of their past will serve in an equally beneficial way to leaven national thinking in this land of vast potentialities. It is their fervent prayer that they will be able to make their ample contribution to the building of this nation, worthy alike of their own rich heritage and of the fateful, yet high destiny of Canada.





## REFERENCES

### PART ONE - INTRODUCTION

1. Late Dr. T. J. Oleson in The Icelandic Canadian, Vol. XLX.
2. Opus citus.
3. "Gardariki or Garda-velda" is the old Scandinavian name of the Scandinavian-Russian kingdom of the 10th and 11th centuries, parts of which were Holmgardar, Kaenu-gardar, Nov-gorod, etc; the name being derived from the castles or strongholds (gardar) which the Scandinavians erected among the Slavonic people, and the word tells the same tale as the Roman castles in England. - Cleasby's Iceland-English Dictionary.
4. Nestor, the reputed author of the earliest Russian Chronicle. The latest theory about Nestor is that the Chronicle is a patchwork of many fragments of Chronicles - Vol. XLX, Encyc. Brit., 11th Edition. (Subsequent references to the Encyc. Brit., are to the same edition).
5. Address delivered in Winnipeg by Prof. L. Biberovich, retired editor of Ukrainian weekly, Vilne Slovo, published in Toronto, Ontario.
6. Edward Augustus Freeman, LL.D. (1823-1892) historian and writer. His most famous work is History of the Norman Conquest. The quoted passage is from his article on the Normans in Vol. XI. Encyc. Brit.
7. E. A. Freeman and Thomas Ashby, Vol. XXV, Encyc. Brit.
8. "The art of writing with an alphabet appears to have been introduced into Germanic Europe in the Iron Age. Something hieratic and mysterious was involved in the idea of letters as used to convey thought, and from the earliest recorded times they were called runes, from the Gothic runa, rún in Icelandic." Edmund Gosse LL. D., D. C. L., Vol. XXIII, Encyc. Brit.
9. "Gothic, the term generally applied to medieval architecture." The author says that the term was at first employed as one of reproach and quotes Evelyn (1702), who, in referring to classic buildings says: "They were demolished by the Goths or Vandals,



who introduced their own licentious style now called Modern or Gothic." Hector Munro Chadwick, M. A. , author of Studies of Anglo-Saxon Institutions. Encyc. Brit. , Vol. 7

10. Arthur William Moore, M. A. (1853-1900), former Speaker of the House of Keys and author of A History of the Isle of Man. Vol. XVII, Encyc. Brit.
11. Opus citus
12. Opus citus
13. Knut Gjerset, Ph.D. , History of Iceland.
14. Th. T. Thorsteinsson. He wrote (in Icelandic) the first three volumes of a History of the Icelanders in the West.
15. G. M. Trevelyan, in History of England.
16. Watts-Dunton, quoted by A. J. Wyatt, in The Threshold of Anglo-Saxon.
17. Ronald Wakefield, of Auburn, California, a student of humans and a man of letters.

## PART TWO - THE ICELANDIC CONTRIBUTION

1. Jónas Jónsson frá Hriflu, an historian and student of the Icelandic people, both at home and abroad. He visited Winnipeg in the late thirties. In his day he was active in politics in Iceland.
2. Lord Dufferin visited Gimli on September 14, 1877. The quotation is from the address he delivered at that time.
3. In the latest Icelandic dictionary the first meaning given to the word "Menntun" is "menning," that is culture. The second is education. "Veginn" means the way or road.
4. Man and Migration. A Bulletin of American Council for Nationalities Service, Vol. XII, No. 4, August, 1965, edited by Dr. William S. Bernard.
5. T. A. Scott, as reported in The Winnipeg Tribune, November 18, 1939, and in Vol. 11, of The History of the Icelanders in the West, written by Th. T. Thorsteinsson.



6. There is a slight conflict in the available records here. Some mention October 22nd, but the evidence supporting October 21st is more convincing.
7. Here also there is a slight conflict in the evidence. The number of issues was either three or five.
8. Th. T. Thorsteinsson, Vol. 111, The History of the Icelanders in the West.
9. Reserves were granted, not only to Indians, but to other groups; to the Mennonites in southern Manitoba in 1874 and to the Icelanders in 1875. The historically important point is what the different national groups emphasized in their Reserves.
10. The words "an unblemished reputation" applied at that time in all the Scandinavian countries. The words have reference to convictions for crime. In some cases a conviction automatically carries with it the loss of voting rights, and in others the disenfranchisement may be imposed by the judge in addition to punishment for the crime. This statutory regulation has been removed in Norway, Sweden, and Denmark, but not in Finland nor in Iceland (except in municipal elections). - Professor Theodor B. Lindal, Department of Law, University of Iceland, in an article published in the Law Journal of the University, 1963, No. 1. Also a brief by Olafur W. Stefansson, a lawyer practising in Reykjavik, Iceland.
11. The pastor of The First Lutheran Church in Winnipeg, Rev. V. J. Eylands, D. D., reports that over 90% of the marriages he performs are mixed, one Icelandic and the other of some other descent.
12. Freeman B. Anderson emigrated to Ontario in 1874 and worked his way through public and high school. He came to Winnipeg and in 1885 received a B. A. degree from the University of Manitoba with first class honours and a scholarship of Eighty Dollars - R. H. Ruth, in Educational Echoes, and W. Kristjanson in The Icelandic People in Manitoba.
13. Dr. Sigurdur Nordal, former Rector of the University of Iceland, now retired, visited Canada in 1932. Not since 1884, when Freeman B. Anderson spoke, had the relationship between English and Old Norse been emphasized.
14. H. B. Scott Symons, of the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, bilingual in English and French, and a student of other languages,





in a letter to this author (1962), and quoted in the Conclusion of this essay.

15. Dr. Watson Kirkconnell, Ph. D. , LL. D. , F. R. S. C. , F. R. Hist. S. , F. R. G. S. , F. R. A. I. , in a lecture delivered in the University of Iceland in 1963.
16. Address at Icelandic Day Celebration, August 3, 1953, published in The Icelandic Canadian, Vol. X11, No. 1
17. For a number of years there were two districts, Thingvalla, near Churchbridge and Logberg, further north.
18. Almanak, published by O. S. Thorgeirsson, in Winnipeg, The first Almanak appeared in 1895 and publication continued for sixty years. It was always wholly in Icelandic.
19. Mrs. Emily Thorson, nee Anderson, graduated from Wesley College (now United College), Winnipeg, in 1905.
20. There are now four Icelandic Old Folks Homes in North America: Gimli, Manitoba, Vancouver, B. C. ; Blaine, Wash. ; and Mountain, N. Dak.

#### PART 111 - THE FINNISH CONTRIBUTION

1. The present Finnish Ambassador to Canada (September, 1965) is Karl Torsten Tikanvaara.
2. Chapter 1V is largely a digest of parts of the lecture given by Mr. Lasse Majamaa.

#### PART 1V - THE NORWEGIAN CONTRIBUTION

1. Unpublished article by Knut Haddeland of Winnipeg.
2. Opus citus.
3. Opus citus.
4. To fill a somewhat similar need a Quarterly in the English language began publishing in Reykjavik, Iceland, under the title "Iceland Review. " It is now in its third year and is prospering.



5. 1916 Calendar. The following is interesting. The percentage of students passing in Provincial examinations is considerably above averages for other high schools in Saskatchewan. The College is open to students of other denominations, indeed, any good student, and the percentage of non-Lutherans during the last ten years has been about a quarter of the total enrollment. --"Analysis and Self-Study - 1965" by the President, Rev. Jacob B. Stolee.

#### PART SEVEN - CONCLUSION

1. Mr. H. B. Scott Symons quoted above
2. Edmund Gosse, LL. D. , D. C. L. , in Vol. XIX, Encyc. Brit.
3. Robt. N. Bain, Assistant Librarian, at that time, British Museum, in Vol. VIII, Encyc. Brit.
4. Edmund Gosse, supra.
5. Opus citus
6. Opus citus
7. Joseph E. Martin, Executive Director of Manitoba Centennial Corporation in an address to the Icelandic Canadian Club, September 28, 1965.
8. "Each In His Own Tongue," by Wm. H. Carruth.



## Appendix I

Excerpts from  
The Saskatchewan Icelanders: A Strand of the Canadian Fabric,  
by Hon. W. J. Lindal, Q. C.

Beowulf, it will be remembered, was the son of a thane of King Hygelac of the Geats. His first unselfish deed, as related in the story, was to cross Sweden to Denmark to help King Hrothgar, thirty of whose thanes had been killed by Grendel. Later there was the mortal fight with the dragon. The combination of unselfishness and heroism in Beowulf serves well to illustrate some of the qualities common to the Nordics.

Prof. Trevelyan speaks of the principal virtues extolled in the Saxon epics--the loyalty of a warrior to his lord, readiness of men to die in battle, the magnanimity of the lord to those fighting under him. These virtues are equally extolled in the old Icelandic Sagas and a good illustration of both is to be found in an event which took place in England in the reign of King Athelstan (or Aethelstan), 924-940, grandson of King Alfred.

Egill Skallagrimsson, the hero of one of the Sagas, and his brother, Thorolfur, were on the continent with their men when they heard that King Athelstan was being harassed by his enemies. They crossed to England and offered to serve Athelstan. The offer was accepted.

The enemy was a combined army of Irish, Welsh, Scottish and Danish forces led by one Anlaf or Olaf <sup>(1)</sup> (Anglo-Saxon, Anlaf Cwaran,





son of Sihtric; Icelandic, Olafur Kvaran Sigtryggsson).

King Athelstan made Egill and Thorolfur leaders (höfthingjar). The day before the big battle of Brunanburh, <sup>(2)</sup> fought in 937, Thorolfur and Egill led a part of King Athelstan's forces against the Welsh earls Hring and Adils. They were driven back and Hring was slain. In reporting the main battle, Gwyn Jones, paraphrasing from the Saga of Egill Skallagrimsson, says:

"Thorolf was slain in a surprise attack by Adils, whereon Egill ran over and assumed command of the Norsemen. Raging ahead he slew Adils and broke the Scottish earls, then swung against the unshielded flank of Olaf's division so that it bent and gave way, and Athelstan's frontal attack completed the rout. King Olaf of Scotland joined the Welsh earls in death, and King Athelstan had won a mighty victory."

After the battle King Athelstan held a great feast at which Egill occupied the second seat of honour. The king gave him a ring and two chests full of silver and said:

"These chests, Egill, you shall have and if you go to Iceland hand (some of) this money to your father. I send it to him in compensation for the loss of a son. You are to divide a part of the money among those of your and Thorolf's kinsmen whom you deem most worthy. But here (in England) you will receive compensation for the loss of a brother, land or coins, whichever you choose; and if you are willing to stay with me



you will receive such honor and recognition as you may make known to me." (3)

Egill accepted the invitation and stayed the following winter at King Athelstan's court.

. . . . .

- (1) "Edward (son of King Alfred) was succeeded in 924 by Athelstan, another great ruler and soldier. In his day the North sought to throw off its allegiance and the Norsemen from Ireland, under a leader named Anlaf or Olaf, joined with the King of Scots and the people of Strathclyde to challenge the Monarch who claimed to be King of all the Britons. The forces of the allies were put to utter route in the great fight at Brunanburh." A History of England, Vol. 1., by A. D. Innes.
- (2) In the Icelandic Saga "Egill Skallagrimsson" the place of battle is called "Vinheidi," Wineheath. That the two were the same battle admits of no doubt. In a lecture given by Gwyn Jones in 1952, one of the Sir Israel Gollancz Memorial Lectures, British Academy, he says: "We must conclude that Vinheidi and Brunanburh were the same battle."
- (3) Saga of Egill Skallagrimsson, 1945. Icelandic edition, p. 108.



## Appendix I I

### The Main Rules and Regulations of the Reformation Society, "Sidabötafélagid," of the Argyle District.

1. The name of our Society is Sidabötafélagid.
2. The purpose of the Society is to raise standards of social behavior and strengthen Christian ways among us.
3. No member of the Society may partake of intoxicating drinks nor give or sell same to others.
4. Members are to avoid using uncouth expressions or profane language, not swear if not necessary, nor seek God's help in trivial affairs.
5. Those members, who have not already acquired the habit of using tobacco, are not to begin using tobacco after they have become members.
6. All persons above the age of 10, men or women, are entitled to membership, and every person who signs these regulations becomes a member, but no one has a vote who is not 18 years of age.
7. Members are obliged to urge people to join the society, and also to urge another to obey the rules.
11. If anyone violates the rules he is to be reprimanded by the foreman or his assistant. Should he not amend his ways after repeated warnings he is subject to be expelled under Rule 12.
12. If it is felt that there are grounds for expelling a member, that is to be announced at a meeting, together with the grounds, and the meeting decides whether the one accused should be expelled; if that decision is reached the foreman notifies the one found guilty and his name is struck from the list of members.
13. If a member decides to withdraw from the Society he shall declare his intention at a meeting or by letter, and his name will then be struck off the list of members.





"Though in Travels Far Distant," by Stephan G. Stephansson  
(Translated from the original Icelandic by Hon. W. J. Lindal, Q. C. )

Though in travels far distant  
Many lands you may roam,  
Your thoughts and your feelings  
Bear the stamp of your home.  
The mountains, the geysers,  
The clear ocean blue,  
The falls and the valleys  
Are all cousins to you.

O'er the earth and the heavens  
In your thoughts you may roam  
Still the falls and green fell-slopes  
Tint your dreamlands and home.  
Your isle-land eternal  
On watch, and serene,  
Nightless world of the springtime,  
In the distance is seen.

It's an Icelandic dreamland  
Where your fondest hopes dwell,  
There's warmth from the glaciers,  
Clad in blossoms each dell.  
The mountains, the geysers,  
The clear ocean blue,  
The falls and the valleys  
Are all cousins to you.









